

THE MONTH

JANUARY 1951

RELIGIOUS ENTHUSIASM

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

TUDOR TRAVELLERS IN ITALY

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BAUDELAIRE: A STUDY IN CONTRADICTION

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RELIGIOUS ENTHUSIASM

By

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

"THERE is a kind of book," writes Mgr. Knox, "about which you may say almost without exaggeration, that it is the whole of a man's literary life, the unique child of his thought. Other writings he may have published on this or that occasion. . . . But it was all beside the mark. The Book was what mattered—he had lived with it all these years, fondled it in his waking thoughts, used it as an escape from anxiety, a solace in long journeys, in tedious conversations." "The Book haunted his imagination like a guilty romance." This is the book¹ which Mgr. Knox has been writing for thirty years and a little more. No year has passed, but he has added to it, patched it and re-written it, in the time that could be spared from other occupations and now at last the work is completed. It is a study in the grand style on the varieties of religious experience, a history of the age-long conflict between the charismatic and the institutional elements of religion. Forty-one years ago Baron von Hügel wrote a book on a similar theme—*The Mystical Element in Religion*—which was also a book of the same kind, since as he said, it embodied well-nigh everything that he had been able to learn and to test in the matter of religion during some thirty years of adult life. Yet it would be hard to find two books written by men who shared the same religious beliefs which differ more widely in their attitude and their conclusions. For the element in religion which is the hero of von Hügel's book has become the villain of Mgr. Knox's, since he sees the appeal to inward spiritual experience, if not as the source of heresy, at least as the predisposing cause which underlies heretical and schismatic movements. It may be said that enthusiasm is not the same as mysticism, and that von Hügel finds no place for enthusiasm as such in his analysis

¹ *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion with special reference to the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, by R. A. Knox (Oxford University Press 30s).

of the three constituent elements of religion. But on the other hand, Mgr. Knox does tend to include the mystics among his enthusiasts and defines the whole movement as "basically the revolt of Platonism against the Aristotelian *mise en scène* of traditional Christianity." He puts the Quietists together with the Jansenists in the very centre of the picture, and works backwards from this point through the Anabaptists and the medieval heretics to the Montanists and the Donatists, and forwards through the Pietists and the Moravians to the Methodists, ending up with a brief survey of some of the most extravagant forms of nineteenth-century sectarianism, such as the Shakers, the Irvingites and the Agapemonites. Now with the exception of the Quietists and perhaps the Pietists, it is clear that mysticism has very little to do with the greater part of these movements. The real subject of Mgr. Knox's book is Enthusiasm in the classical eighteenth-century sense of the word, that is to say a kind of unbridled religious emotionalism which expresses itself in the orgies of revivalism and in the moral disorders of antinomianism. God knows there has been no lack of these things in the history of the Christian sects, and as Mgr. Knox travels backwards and forwards through the by-ways and blind alleys of the religious underworld, among Circumcellions and Bogomils, Beghards and Brethren of the Free Spirit, Taborites and Adamites, Anabaptists and Ranters, Camisards and Convulsionaries, Shakers and Jumpers and Agapemonites, one can no longer feel surprised at Bishop Butler's reaction when he observed to Wesley that "the pretending to extraordinary revelations and gifts of the Holy Ghost is a horrid thing, a very horrid thing."

But what have men like Pascal and Tillemont and Fénelon to do in this galley? For neither the Jansenists nor the Quietists were enthusiasts in the strict sense of the word and Fénelon above all with his exquisite sense of the finest shades of theological statement and his wholehearted devotion to Rome and the cause of Catholic unity represents the very principle which preserves Catholicism from the virus of the sectarian spirit. The Jansenists, it is true, admitted that spirit in its most virulent form, but during their first and most characteristic period, it took the form not of unbridled emotionalism but of an extreme theological traditionalism which was hostile not only to mysticism but to all those forms of devotion, like the devotion to the Sacred Heart,

which had an emotional appeal. The real leaders of the party, Arnauld, the hard-headed controversialist who could never admit that he was wrong, and Nicole, the timid casuist who could never feel sure that he was right, are neither of them enthusiasts and were both as anti-mystical as any theologians could be. They were legalists and rationalists who were determined to screw Catholicism into the iron mould of their own private orthodoxy. All this is recognized by Mgr. Knox in his brilliant analysis of the Jansenist spirit. Why then does he place the Jansenists in the centre of the canvas between the Quakers and the Methodists, genuine enthusiasts for whom Arnauld and Nicole would have nothing but contempt and aversion? Partly, I think, on account of the irresistible attraction that Port Royal has always had for men of letters from Cousin and Ste. Beuve to the Abbé Bremond. But also because the later period of Jansenism did actually give birth to one of the most extravagant and pathological examples of genuine "enthusiasm" in the extraordinary phenomena which took place at the tomb of the Deacon Paris in the cemetery of St. Médard. Nevertheless, the gulf between Port Royal and St. Médard is so wide that the connection is more than an accidental one such as is to be found in the history of many other religious movements.

In any case the real evil of Jansenism is not to be found in these extravagances which injured the cause of the Jansenists more than the Catholics. It is impossible to exaggerate the harm that was done to Catholicism by the twin heresies of Jansenism and Quietism. But it did not consist in an unleashing of the forces of enthusiasm but in the drying up of the great movement of Catholic mysticism which was the glory of the seventeenth century in the arid atmosphere of theological controversy and party strife which was diffused by the Jansenists and their allies and opponents.

This does not bear out Mgr. Knox's view of the "recurrent situation in Church history in which an excess of charity threatens unity." On the contrary, what we see is not an excess of charity but an excess of animosity and hatred. From the vinegar and gall of the sectarian spirit a poison was distilled which infected the life of the Church for generations. Nor was this spirit confined to the Jansenists. Vendetta bred vendetta and the technique of underground warfare was only too easy to learn.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the Quietist controversy itself. The battle against Pure Love was fought out on the back

stairs with no holds barred. What could be more revealing than that letter of the great Bossuet himself, which is quoted by Mgr. Knox? "La fureur de M. de Cambrai contre moi est extrême; sa cabale est terrible et ses artifices. Mais nous avons pour nous Dieu, la vérité, la bonne intention, le courage, le Roi, Mme de Maintenon et cetera." For if a man like Bossuet could make this naive appeal to the power behind the throne, what can we expect from lesser and baser men, like his odious nephew? The real villains of the piece were not the enthusiasts of either party but the men who tried to solve religious problems by political intrigue and the cabals of court and Parlement. We can trace their slimy trail all through the eighteenth century in the war of factions which used theological dogmas to serve the dirty ends of second-rate politicians and which achieved its ultimate triumph in the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and the destruction of the Gallican Church itself.

It is a relief to turn from this depressing spectacle to the contemporary English scene and to the history of the Methodist revival. Here at any rate there is no lack of genuine enthusiasts, and the relations of Wesley and Whitfield with the official leaders of eighteenth-century Anglicanism provide an almost perfect example of the clash between an "enthusiastic" experimental type of evangelical religion and an official ecclesiasticism of the most rational and unenthusiastic kind. It offers Mgr. Knox an ideal subject for the demonstration of his thesis and one which displays the breadth of his sympathy and the acuteness of his critical powers. Wesley's position as the canonized founder of the most widespread form of modern Protestantism is apt to make us forget what a paradoxical figure he was. How are we to reconcile his hard-headed common sense with the unbounded credulity he shows towards every kind of praeternatural manifestation? How is his intense individualism reconcilable with his authoritarianism and his vast work of organization? Above all, how can we explain the paradox that this great propagator of enthusiasm was himself by no means a typical enthusiast? and that this man who owed so much to the mystics like M. de Renty and St. Francis de Sales was at the same time an enemy of mysticism? All these riddles are discussed and answered by Mgr. Knox. He gives us the whole man with all his complexities and inconsistencies and shows how these idiosyncrasies which separated him from the other great

figures of the evangelical revival were at the same time the conditions of his lasting achievement.

Mgr. Knox does not fail to do justice to these other lesser figures. It is one of the merits of his treatment that he shows us Wesley "not as a solitary peak but as the summit of a range." Yet one cannot help regretting that time and space have prevented him from giving a fuller account of these minor figures. Personally I would gladly have sacrificed the Donatists and the Albigensians and the Jansenists in order to hear more of men like Berridge and Howell Harris and Venn and Grimshaw and Hugh Bourne who played such a great part in the religious life of our not very remote ancestors. No adequate literary treatment of these men and of their work exists. Indeed, one cannot help being struck by the failure of the Evangelicals to gain the sympathy of the men of letters. They won the support of statesmen and soldiers, of men of science and men of business. But the men of letters and especially the novelists (with the exception of George Eliot) are entirely hostile and have created a whole series of repulsive and grotesque figures, like Mr. Slope and Mr. Stiggins and the Vicar of Wrexhill. Yet the early Evangelicals were by no means lacking in literary gifts, as we see from the hymns of Charles Wesley and John Newton. Nevertheless, the cause of enthusiasm did find one great literary champion during the eighteenth century in the person of William Law, and I am surprised that Mgr. Knox has not referred to his controversy with Dr. Trapp, the author of *The Nature, Folly, Sin and Danger of Being Righteous Overmuch*, since it goes to the very heart of the matter and has a direct bearing upon his own thesis.

Law points out that the current eighteenth-century attitude to enthusiasm is based on a double misunderstanding: a misunderstanding of the nature of enthusiasm and a misunderstanding of human nature itself. For enthusiasm is not a morbid psychological state. It is nothing else than the natural kindling of human will and imagination by some overmastering motive.

To appropriate Enthusiasm to Religion is the same Ignorance of Nature as to appropriate Love to Religion; for Enthusiasm, a kindled inflamed Spirit of Life is as common, as universal, as essential to human Nature, as Love is; it goes into every kind of Life as Love does, and has only such a Variety of Degrees in Mankind as Love hath.

Enthusiasts therefore we all are, as certainly as we are Men; and consequently Enthusiasm is not a Thing blamable in itself, but is the common Condition of human Life in all its States; and every Man that lives either well or ill, is that which he is from that prevailing Fire of Life or driving of our Wills and Desires which is properly called Enthusiasm. You need not go to a Cloister, the Cell of a Monk, or to a Field Preacher to see Enthusiasts, they are everywhere at Balls and Masquerades, at Court and at the Exchange. They sit in all Coffee Houses and cant in all Assemblies.

All professed Infidels are remarkable Enthusiasts, they have kindled a bold Fire from a few faint Ideas, and therefore they are all Zeal and Courage and Industry to be constantly blowing it up. A Tyndal and a Collins are as inflamed with the Notions of Infidelity, as a St. Bennet and St. Francis with the Doctrines of the Gospel.

But this is not what Dr. Trapp means by Enthusiasm. The only enthusiasts that he recognizes are the religious ones, all those who are inflamed by a strong desire for spiritual perfection, men who seek God as passionately as the enthusiasts of this world seek riches and honour and pleasure.

Now who [writes Law] can help looking with Love, Pity and Compassion upon these poor Souls, longing for that which has been so long lost; asking after that, which scarce anyone will tell them anything of, and wanting to enter upon Paths, where there are few or no Footsteps to be seen, nor any Travellers in Motion! Now had these awakened Souls lived in the First Ages of the Church, nay, I may say in almost any till these very last Ages of it, their Zeal had not been in vain; they could have been at no Loss to know how they were to proceed in their heavenly Purpose; because they could have always been immediately directed to some living Examples of the perfect Spirit of the Gospel, who were publicly known and acknowledged by all to be such, and who had the same undisputed Right to point out every Degree of Christian Perfection as John the Baptist had to preach up Mortification and Self denial. Every Age, and every Sex, consecrated Virgins, holy Widows, Converts and Penitents, Priests and People of all Conditions, had their open, known and public Standards to resort to, where everyone was sure to be guided and directed, assisted and encouraged to live up to that Height of Holiness and Perfection, that was proper to their Age and Condition.

Here, it seems to me, Law has found the key to the problem, for all these "enthusiastic" movements which have drawn men out

of the world into communities and groups which attempt to live according to the pattern of the Gospel are nothing but attempts to recover the lost tradition of the religious life in a Protestant environment. This is true of the Quakers and the Methodists, of the Pietists and the Moravians and not least of those strange celibate and communist sects in the United States like the Shakers and the Oneida Community. The direct influence of Catholic spirituality is to be seen most clearly in a movement which Mgr. Knox does not mention: the non-Lutheran Pietists of the Rhineland who were represented by Gerhard Tersteegen.¹ The dogmatic peculiarities and the moral eccentricities of these movements are accidental. Their essential characteristic is the ideal of evangelical perfection—the life of the counsels.

If this is true, it seems to me that there is a profound difference between the two classes of enthusiasts dealt with in Mgr. Knox's work. On the one hand, there are the great medieval heresies like the Bogomils and the Albigensians which represent a revolt against the whole tradition of Catholic spirituality under the influence of non-Christian dualism or pantheism. On the other, there are the post-Reformation movements of sectarian pietism which represent an attempt to find a Protestant substitute for the lost institutions and traditions of the religious life. And finally, there are the movements which represent a kind of schismatic conservatism, like the Donatists and the Jansenists. But though these movements have their enthusiasts, like all religious movements, they are not true examples of enthusiasm, since they are essentially authoritarian and traditionalist.

In the case of the medieval heretics, however, it is often difficult to discover their real beliefs owing to the absence of documentary evidence so that we have little to go on except the accusations of their enemies.

A good example of this is the case of the Stedingers whom Mgr. Knox describes as "an obscure German Flemish sect whose practices as they are described by the chronicles were those of full-blooded Satanism." Actually they were neither Flemings nor heretics, but a Frisian peasant people who were accused of every kind of abomination by the Archbishop of Bremen because they refused to pay tithes or acknowledge his feudal overlord-

¹ His chief work, *The Lives of the Holy Souls*, which occupied him for twenty years, is entirely devoted to the lives of the Catholic mystics.

ship. In this case the Pope recognized that he had been misled, but not unfortunately until the Stedingers had been massacred by an army of pseudo-Crusaders. Here Mgr. Knox has been misled by Fleury, and throughout this section of his work he is inclined to rely on out-of-date authorities, like Fleury and Limborch, and to neglect the more recent works. His bibliography does not include Guiraud's exhaustive work on the history of the medieval Inquisition, but only an English translation of his earlier sketch. It does not mention Dr. Obolensky's important book on the Bogomils nor does it refer to Troeltsch's *Social Teaching of the Christian Churches and Groups* which contains the best general account of the minor sects with which Mgr. Knox is specially concerned. Moreover the bibliography is merely a list of titles, without dates or place of publication or number of volumes.

These are but trifling defects, but a good book deserves a good bibliography; especially a book like this which is the fruit of so much study and research in a field which has hitherto been little cultivated. And of those who have written on the subject, how few are readable! Isaac Taylor's *History of Enthusiasm* is not unfairly described by Mgr. Knox as "probably the most uniformly dull book ever written." One should perhaps make an exception in favour of Gottfried Arnold's *Unparteyische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie* which is redeemed by the author's enthusiasm and sympathy for the enthusiasts of whom he writes. But who now reads that jungle of a book? No. Ronald Knox's book remains alone in the field without any rival. It should appeal not only to the dwindling class of scholars and specialists, but to every educated man who is interested in the spiritual history of the past, and above all to those who are interested in the spiritual background of eighteenth-century culture, which has hitherto been so much neglected by the literary historians.

TUDOR TRAVELLERS IN ITALY¹

By

JAMES LEES-MILNE

THE English Renaissance sculptural and architectural style can be traced fairly distinctly to one prototype. This is the sumptuous table tomb in Westminster Abbey raised by King Henry VIII in 1511 to his grandmother, the saintly Margaret Beaufort. All of touchstone, it displays on its four free sides roundels, separated by fluted composite pilasters, of ribboned bay wreaths enclosing escutcheons in gilt bronze. At a glance we see that the design of this tomb—the wonderful effigy upon it is still in the medieval tradition—derives from artistic influences hitherto unknown in England. Its style must have struck the Gothic eyes of contemporaries as something totally alien and extraordinary. It is of course absolutely classical and in fact absolutely Italian. The author of the tomb was a Florentine, one Pietro Torregiani, brought over to England at the bidding of the young Henry VIII who was determined to excel his French cousin, Francis I, in the production of artistic masterpieces in the new vogue. But Henry was not so successful as Francis in inducing Italian artists either to come to England or to stay. Whereas Francis could boast of patronising several Italian artists of renown, like Leonardo, Cellini and Primaticcio, Henry had to rest content with far smaller fry, and consequently far fewer Italian masterpieces. With the exception of Pietro Torregiani, Benedetto da Rovezzano and Giuliano da Maiano, artists admittedly little esteemed in the country of their origin, the numerous other Italian artists known to have been in Henry's employment are hardly more than names to us. And when we have taken into account Margaret Beaufort's tomb and that still greater work by Torregiani, Henry VII's monument, which followed in 1512, the terra-cotta busts in roundels of Roman Emperors at Hampton Court and the superb carved wooden screen in King's College

¹ From a forthcoming book on *The Tudor Renaissance* by kind permission of Messrs. B. T. Batsford Ltd.

Chapel, Cambridge, there are few important works of art left behind by Henry VIII's Italians. There is scarcely one picture and certainly no complete building by an Italian protégé to date from this reign.

Nevertheless in spite of the paucity of classical work by Henry's Italians it is true to say that the earliest English Renaissance art, sculptural and architectural, is derived from Italian sources. The semi-classical church monuments and country houses carried out by English artisans during this reign owe their abrupt divorce from the Gothic and flirtation with the classical style to the direct influence of the Italian artists who were visiting these shores. Because of Henry's break with Rome and the slow establishment of a national church in England the Italian artists gradually diminished in numbers. By 1545 there were definite signs that Henry was determined to allow no further papist immigrants from Italy, for Lord Cobham then at Rome received instructions "to send over no more strangers, and move the rest there to send none, for the king is not content."

Yet if the Italian artists no longer came to England the English dilettanti still contrived to visit Italy. But they had to be well on their guard, particularly in Elizabeth's reign, for her spies were everywhere, and reported back to the government whatever her subjects communicated, during their travels, to prominent Italians, especially Romans. When we read the records and impressions—of which there are few—of English travellers in Italy during the sixteenth century, we at once notice how their interest in visual things had quickened as a result of the brief impact of the Renaissance upon their minds. In medieval times both the aristocratic and merchant classes had travelled to the continent in surprising numbers, jabbering a hurried dog Latin to all and sundry in whatsoever country they found themselves. Their pilgrimages were directed, apart from business errands, to religious shrines or seats of learning solely. Now politics had become for travellers a prime interest and the arts a secondary one. The two first Englishmen of this century to record their foreign impressions in print are Sir Thomas Hoby in *A Book of the Travaile and Lief of Me*, written in 1547 and William Thomas in the *History of Italy* published in 1549. Thomas Hoby, described by Roger Ascham as "many ways well furnished with learning and very expert in divers tongues" was to inherit Bisham Abbey on the death of his

half-brother, the diplomatist, Sir Philip Hoby, in 1558. Thomas Hoby died while ambassador at Paris in 1566 at the early age of thirty-six, and was brought home to be buried at Bisham. William Thomas was well qualified to write his learned treatise since he was an eminent Italian scholar who had lived in the peninsula most of his life. His history is impregnated with violent and consistent anti-Romanism, and he was eventually to die for conspiring with Wyatt against Queen Mary in 1554.

The value to us of both books lies in the observations, based on the new humanistic teaching of the English Universities, and the earliest expressed criticisms they contain upon architectural subjects, sketchy and unsophisticated though these are. Not only do the authors make mention of the monuments of antiquity but very occasionally those of the high Renaissance as well. It is noteworthy, however, that as regards the sister arts they seldom refer to sculpture and never to painting, which even the later Elizabethans fairly consistently ignored. Hoby actually admires a modern fountain of marble at Messina. "For a new worke and that not finished at my being there," he writes, "I saw a fountain of very white marble graven with the story of Actaeon and such other, by on Giovan Angelo [this was the Orion Fountain put up by Giovanni Agnolo Montorsoli in 1547], a florentine, which to my eyes is on of the fairest piece of worke that ever I sawe," a passage that makes us much wonder what "the fountain placed in the garden at Bisham" by him in 1563 looked like. Thomas too admired—but these were sculptural works of the ancients—Romulus and Remus, the Apollo and Laocoon.

Both men speak of the numbers of their young compatriots in Italy on the pretence of study, but really for that love of the country, its life and climate, for and in which every cultivated Englishman subsequently has yearned and basked. Hoby mentions several by name. In Padua he notices Sir T. Wyatt and Mr. John Arundel ostensibly learning Latin at the university. At Naples there are so many English consorting together that he prudently slinks off by himself to Sicily "for the tung's sake." Back in Padua again he gives a whole string of English names and returning home by Antwerp he meets the ill-fated but talented Earl of Devonshire,¹ "the comeliness of whose person" was to

¹ Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devonshire 1525-56, to whom as an amateur draughtsman Walpole gives a small niche in his *Anecdotes of Painting*.

involve him in candidature for the hands of both Tudor queens and imprisonment for the greater part of his thirty years' existence. Thomas, who knew the Italians well, acknowledges that at this date they still behaved more affably towards strangers than towards their own people, a courtesy by no means reciprocated by the surly Protestant visitors from the uncouth north. He suggests that the English have much to learn from the excellent manners and politeness of the Italians. These good qualities he quickly and characteristically offsets out of political or religious prejudice as follows: "for whereas temperance, modesty and other civil virtues excel in the number of the Italian nobility, more than in the nobility of any other nation that I know: so undoubtedly the fleshly appetite with unnatural heat and other things in them that be vicious, do pass all the terms of reason or honesty," vices attributed by him, of course, to the pompous living and corrupting example of the Pope, whom he calls "the Bishop."

Hoby, as a visitor, was struck by the superior comfort and luxury enjoyed by the Italian nobility, which the other, as a resident, rather took for granted. He remarked how at the Palace at Mantua all the chambers were hung with rich arras and the beds covered with cloth of gold, sewn with pearls, for the impending visit of the Prince of Spain. At Amalfi he and his friend, Whitehorn, stayed with the Marquess of Capistrano in the castle of that nobleman's mother, the Duchess of Amalfi, where they ate off silver. He and Whitehorn shared a bedroom "hanged with cloth of gold and velvet, wherein were two beds, the one of silver worke and the other of vellett with pillows, bolsters and the sheets curiously wrought with needleworke." Indeed, it was customary all over Europe for guests to share a bedroom and even at English inns for men to share the same bed and then rare enough to find "shetes clean, to lie between, made of thread and twine." Richard Smith who was to travel across the continent in 1563 noted in his Journal with pleasant surprise that in Flemish and German inns guests were provided with a bed each, covered with a feather duvet.

In Rome Hoby speaks of the "faire antiquities" which he has seen in every quarter, but makes no further comment upon them. But Thomas has obviously studied them with attention during his long sojourn. He writes with some understanding of "the wonderful majesty of buildings that the only roots thereof do yet repre-

sent, the huge temples, the infinite great palaces, the unmeasurable pillars, most part of one piece, fine marble, and well wrought, the goodly arches of triumph, the baines, the conducts of water, the images as well of brass as of marble, the obelisks . . ." surely about the first recorded case of an Englishman noticing such things. He furthermore evinces a scientific turn of mind, for he investigates the reason why bricks used by the old Romans were much more durable than those used by his contemporaries in England. He shows too a certain aesthetic discernment when, for instance, he praises the beauty of the city gates that hardly fulfil their ostensible purpose of defence. The Roman baths he describes with minute interest and admires the Colosseum on account of its "excellent workmanship and proportion." The Pantheon, to which he refers in considerable detail, he deems the "perfectest of all the antiquities" and marvels at the engineering feat in its dome "vaulted like the half of an egg."

Coming down to the architectural works of the moderns, Thomas dwells at length upon the Duomo at Florence, which he calls "an excellent fair building," particularly favouring the fine panels of black and white marble (did it recall to his mind the familiar half-timber work of his native border counties at home?) and the precision with which they were pieced together. What evoked his special praise was Brunelleschi's dome, a feature that very understandably made all foreigners interested in building construction marvel at as the phenomenon of engineering. Hoby thought it "worthie to be seen of all travellers," and Robert Dalynghton towards the end of the century even praised "that excellent architect Brunelleschi" by name. Thomas actually directs his scientific mind to the dome's construction, "this half of an egg"—he uses the same analogy again—"so artificially made that almost it seemeth a miracle. For it is so high, that the pommel on the top seemeth a very small thing to them that stand below." And so it had seemed to several generations after Brunelleschi's, a very miracle indeed, its construction only explained by some wise men, to whom the architect's own note-books were not history, by a gigantic heap of earth which, having been raised in the transept and the dome as it were moulded around it, was carted away afterwards. Giotto's campanile and the baptistery come in for praise, including the "three brazen gates very sumptuous and fair"—evidence that even in these early days Ghiberti's

masterpiece was thought to be made of bronze and not gold, as has lately been revealed to us.

"And now," Thomas grants us the unusual concession, "remaineth to speak of the new buildings," but without, it is true, quite the same enthusiasm as for the old. He visits St. Peter's great cathedral then causing its architects the elaborate and protracted travail of its creation. As far as he is capable of judging the church at this incomplete stage, he does not think highly of it, but admits "it hath in it many beautiful and fine things," notably the tabernacle of peperino marble, that was Bramante's, now replaced by the vast baldachino on twisted columns that is the masterpiece of Bernini. However, he has confidence that the Vatican buildings when finished will become "the goodliest thing of this world not only for the antique pillars that have been taken out of the antiquities, and bestowed there, but also for the greatness and excellent good proportion that it hath," a confidence established by the Belvedere Court, for which he expresses unqualified admiration. Of the Roman palaces he approves the Farnese for perfect proportions, transcending those of the Strozzi and Medici in Florence, but accounts Andrea Doria's palace at Genoa the finest dwelling-house built in his time.

If Hoby and Thomas were the first English travellers in Italy to record critical impressions, many other intelligent and observant men followed suit before the sixteenth century had closed. Sir Philip Sidney unfortunately was not in the least interested in architecture, if we may conclude from an extract in a letter written on the continent to his brother at home: "for surely houses are but houses in every place, for they do but differ *secundum magis et minus*," whereas Richard Smith was positively contemptuous of paintings, which he bracketed with holy relics to be passed over for their utter "tediousness." On the other hand Sidney was about the first Englishman to assess the importance of contemporary Italian painting. In Venice he sought the friendship of Tintoretto and Paul Veronese, to each of whom he sat for his portrait.

Fynes Moryson published his entertaining *Itinerary* throughout Europe in 1594. Interspersed in his highly observant account of men and manners are occasional references to buildings. The architecture of Venice¹ appealed to him most favourably—by this

¹ Richard Smith on the other hand thought very little of Venice, and the only object there he really admired was an Ethiopian crocodile. But then he was hardly an aesthete.

date let us remember it was politically dangerous to admire anything Roman—even her modern buildings. He described Sansovino's library which Palladio had pronounced the most sumptuous and beautiful example of architecture since the time of the ancients, as "remarkable," adding that it "is held by great artists a rare work," and the Rialto bridge, only just finished, as "the eighth miracle of the world." He, too, like Sir Philip Sidney, cared for painting, and reckoned Titian, Tintoretto and Bellini among Venice's supreme artists. He also greatly admired in Rome that pictorial aquarium of floating arms and legs, the Last Judgment upon the end wall of the Sistine Chapel, and deduced some solemn theories upon Michelangelo's humour and ingenuity in depicting the Pope's Master of Ceremonies as one of the devils, and hiring a porter whom he crucified and stabbed with a pen-knife to make him impersonate passion and suffering.

As for Sir Robert Dalington, he in his *Survey of the Great Duke's State of Tuscany*, published in 1596, showed himself to be more interested in the economic and social welfare of the Great Duke's subjects, their poverty and want, than in the beauty of his palaces, stately and of royal magnificence though he acknowledged them to be. What pleased him most were the broad paving stones of the streets of Florence, which made walking possible with the minimum discomfort in the foul weather. Thomas Coryat, possessed with a demon of curiosity that could never be assuaged, published with the turn of the century his *Crudities*. His taste in architecture was somewhat conventional but correct, and he gives us detailed pictures of the chief palaces in Venice. "Here is the greatest magnificence of architecture to be seene that any place under the sun doth yeelde." He even preferred the palace of the Doges to that of Fontainebleau, considering Sansovino's stair vaulting with its gilded plasterwork far superior to the stairways at the Louvre. His enthusiasm for architecture impelled him to obtain an introduction to Sir Henry Wotton, that notable amateur and author of one of the great English text-books on classical building, *The Elements of Architecture*, published in 1624.

For the most part, it must be confessed, these travellers' pages make turgid reading, and apart from occasional excerpts, they amount to catalogues of misspelt foreign cities or interminable statistics which we to-day find wholly uninspiring—the number of bushels of grain imported annually by the Milanese or the

rapacities of the exchequer of the papal states—and relieved by so little humour, so comparatively meagre a sense of history or art. All the time that we are plodding through them, vainly hoping to be rewarded by a glimmer of indiscreet truth through a chink in the padded, buttoned minds of these travelling automata, we are oppressed by one overwhelming reminder. It is that these men were passionately, intolerantly Protestant—or so they strive to make us believe. The intensity of their Protestantism was, we very soon recognize, dictated by a political expediency, which so wrought upon emissaries of Elizabeth and James I that they seldom dared impart what they truly thought about anything, to the great detriment in our opinion of their aesthetic judgments. The impregnable façades with which they persistently confronted the provoked Italians were by the end of the century greeted with polite but distant suspicion and sometimes with violence. So we find that in 1591 “my Lord Zouche,” the builder of Bramshill, “and Henry Wotton are especially laid wait for in Rome” as potential spies and persons possessed of valuable State secrets. Whereupon, having once discovered the plot, the elder man, Zouche, wisely resolved to go no further south than Padua. The truth was that, except they went to Italy by special commission as spies, travellers there were frowned upon by Elizabeth and James and the staid sort of folk at home. William Harrison, writing his *Description of England* in 1577, expressed the middle-class disapproval of Protestant gentlemen visiting the land of papistry, where they only learnt arrogance, atheism, corrupt manners and unnatural vice. Harrison was such a model of what a good Englishman ought to be that he never went abroad at all, his chief deterrent, he priggishly admitted, being a healthy loathing of sodomy. Men of the calibre of Sir Philip Sidney and Henry Peacham likewise recognized these grave and contagious evils, but being more sophisticated and less insular than the majority of their countrymen, thought that men of reliable character might run the risk. “For hard sure it is,” wrote Sidney, “to know England, without you know it by comparing it with some other country. . . .” And indeed, notwithstanding the frowns and lip-pursings of the pecksniffs, upper-class Englishmen, fired with that Elizabethan spirit of adventure which acted upon them like an intoxicant, could not be restrained from travelling to distant lands, even by way of the cities of Sodom and Gomor-

rah. They were surprisingly good linguists, for on the continent in the sixteenth century, no foreigner could understand English. Many of them had at home previously learnt Italian from eminent anti-Catholic refugees, like John Florio, who inculcated into them as well as the language a taste for the life and things Italian.

To a very limited extent, however, did these Tudor travellers allow what they saw in Italy to influence their own architecture when they got home. They were of course no longer permitted to bring back Italian craftsmen to translate Italian themes upon English soil, even had they wished to do so, for English cultural affinities were now with the Lutheran north. Loyally they went in ever-increasing numbers to northern France, Flanders and Germany—not that they enjoyed travelling in these countries as much as in Italy, but because it was politically safer. There they picked up French, Flemish and German text-books, artists and artisans, and inevitably, since it was sanctioned by their government, took them home to England. Hence the Renaissance influence upon the arts changed within a generation from Italian to Low Country ones, made manifest to us in the form and detail of the great Elizabethan and Jacobean country houses. But the Italian style could not be kept in abeyance indefinitely and with Inigo Jones it came into its own again.

BAUDELAIRE:

A STUDY IN CONTRADICTION

By
MICHAEL HAMBURGER

I

"To explain, where poetry is concerned, is to destroy."—PHILIPPE SOUPAULT

IT would be interesting to collect all the statements which distinguished writers and critics have made about Baudelaire. The reader of such a collection would be confronted with dozens of different Baudelaires; but, though he might well fail to discover the authentic one, he would learn a great deal about the nature and the limitations of criticism. Indirectly, he might even arrive at a better understanding of the nature of poetry.

I shall begin by recalling a few of these opinions. Victor Hugo, in a letter to Baudelaire, praised him for creating a *frisson nouveau*, and proceeded: "I have never said: Art for Art's sake. I have always said: Art for the sake of Progress. Basically, that is the same thing, and your mind is too penetrating not to perceive it. . . . What are you doing? You are going ahead. You are moving forward." Our first Baudelaire, then, is a progressive one, marching forward; it is not surprising that he bears a certain resemblance to Victor Hugo.

Sainte-Beuve, who wrote to Baudelaire in 1857, soon after the publication of the *Fleurs du Mal*, was sympathetic and patronizing: "You must have suffered deeply, my dear child," he observed; and he went on to implore Baudelaire to "cultivate his angel," to "let himself go," "not to be afraid of being too common," to be more spontaneous and more passionate and to forsake his morbid preoccupations. In other words, he was asking Baudelaire to renounce his originality, to become respectable. This was an attitude which Baudelaire could understand; but if he had adopted

it, his renunciation would have been a complete one: he would have given up poetry. "What is art?", Baudelaire asked himself in *Fusées*, and replied: "Prostitution." He was capable of jumping from one extreme to the other, but never of compromise; the kind of cant by which Sainte-Beuve attempted to justify himself in *Volupté* was the very thing which Baudelaire abominated and felt called upon to expose.

A very different Baudelaire emerges from an article written in the same year by Barbey d'Aurevilly: "The poet, terrible and terrified, has wanted us to inhale the abomination of that gruesome basket which, a pale canephorus, he carries on his head bristling with horror." Apart from the exotic analogies and a vocabulary worthy of a specialist in horror and heresy, this article was the first to state a point of view which many later critics have taken up: "These are not the *Flowers of Evil*, these poems of M. Baudelaire. They are the most powerful essence that has ever been extracted from those accursed flowers. The torment, then, which such a poison must produce saves us from the danger of being intoxicated by it." The conclusion of Barbey's article is the one which Huysmans paraphrased at the end of his preface to *A Rebours*: "After the *Flowers of Evil* there are only two courses open to the poet who made them unfurl: either to blow his brains out . . . or to become a Christian." E. Thierry had already compared Baudelaire to Dante; but Barbey was the first to draw attention to the Christian aspect of the *Fleurs du Mal*. His opinion was that Baudelaire's "Satanism" was a conscious attitude, an artifice, and that such an attitude implies its opposite. He quotes the lines:

Ah! Seigneur! donnez-moi la force et le courage
De contempler mon cœur et mon corps sans dégoût!

as an example of inconsequence, of an involuntary lapse into Christian piety. Baudelaire's greatest achievement, he suggests, was that he was guilty of few such lapses and succeeded in imposing his will on the refractory medium of verse. He calls Baudelaire "one of those sophisticated and ambitious materialists who can hardly conceive of more than one kind of perfection—material perfection," and, elsewhere, praises him in these terms: "The artist, vigilant and incredibly persistent in the fixed contemplation of his idea, has not been too badly defeated." We can

hardly fail to notice that even within the confines of Barbey's article there is a major contradiction. Granted that Baudelaire was a Christian in disguise, how could he be a materialist? This contradiction is at the root of most of the controversies for which Baudelaire has provided the pretext.

Baudelaire's own critical writings will shed some light on the contradiction; but before considering his works I should like to summarize the opinions of some of his later critics. Gautier's long essay, which serves as an introduction to many editions of the *Fleurs du Mal*, was written in 1868, soon after Baudelaire's death. In his own way—that of an intimate friend rather than that of a critic—Gautier tried to destroy the legendary Baudelaire, the Satanist, the *poseur*, the decadent who had set out to emulate the involuntary eccentricities of Gérard de Nerval and made a science of shocking the *bourgeoisie*. While many of his judgments of the works were commonplace, Gautier contributed more than anyone else to our knowledge of the man; the Baudelaire of his essay had at least become humanly plausible. The Journal of the brothers Goncourt contains other first-hand impressions of the poet.

In his *Histoire du Romantisme*, written in 1874, Gautier added another sketch of Baudelaire: "Besides, the poet has no indulgence for the vices, the depravities, and the monstrosities which he records with the coolness of a painter employed in a museum of anatomy. He repudiates them as offences against the rhythm of the universe; for, in spite of his eccentricities, he loves order and the 'Norm.' Pitiless towards others, he judges himself no less severely; with virile courage he tells of his errors, his aberrations, his frenzies, his perversities, without sparing the hypocrisy of the reader afflicted in secret with similar vices." It should be noted that, though Gautier turns Baudelaire into a moralist, he does not attempt to turn him into an impersonal and intransigent spectator; Baudelaire remains the victim, as well as the analyst, of his own vices.

Henry James, like such professional critics as Brunetière and Faguet, continued to regard Baudelaire either as an impostor or as a poet of the second order. In 1884 James wrote: "*Les Fleurs du Mal* is evidently a sincere book, so far as anything for a man of Baudelaire's temper and culture could be sincere. Sincerity seems to us to belong to a range of qualities with which Baudelaire and

his friends were but scantily concerned." Who, one wonders, are the friends referred to by James? A poet more solitary than Baudelaire can scarcely have existed. Either the friends in question were a mere rhetorical device or James was misled by the dedication of the *Fleurs du Mal* into thinking that Baudelaire was a disciple of Gautier. James continues: "Our impatience is of the same order as that which we should feel if a poet, pretending to pluck the *Flowers of Good*, should come and present us, as specimens, a rhapsody on plumcake and *eau de Cologne*." According to Brunetière, Baudelaire "was the dupe of his own mystifications" and a poet who used rhetoric to cover up his banality. Faguet thought that "Baudelaire est souvent très mauvais écrivain."

On the other hand, Baudelaire had already acquired a large posthumous following, especially among the poets; Verlaine, Rimbaud, Laforgue, and Mallarmé praised him in the most fervent terms. Swinburne in England, Stefan George in Germany—to name only major poets—added their tribute. Verlaine recognized in Baudelaire the poet of modern life: "He was profoundly original in this respect: powerfully and essentially, he represents modern man as he has become as the result of the refinements of excessive civilization; modern man with his senses sharpened and vibrant, his mind painfully subtle, his brain saturated with tobacco, his blood boiling with alcohol." Rimbaud called him "the first seer, king of poets," but censured him for failing to express his new vision in new forms. Remy de Gourmont drew attention to Baudelaire's indebtedness to Racine. Anatole France pointed out that "his moral attitude does not differ much from that of the theologians."

In more recent years, Paul Valéry has written: "With Baudelaire, French poetry has at last transcended national frontiers. It has found readers everywhere; it has imposed itself as the very poetry of modern times." His argument is that French poetry rarely appeals to foreigners; Baudelaire, he claims, combined the intelligence of a critic with the poetic impulse and, by reacting against the vagueness, the egocentricity and the vulgarity of the Romantic poets, created a modern classicism which can be appreciated by those whose knowledge of French is imperfect.

Mr. Aldous Huxley called Baudelaire "a Christian inside out," ridiculed his pretensions and accused him of bigotry: "Baudelaire

was a puritan inside out. Instead of asceticism and respectability he practised debauchery." Mr. T. S. Eliot's judgment, at first sight, resembles Mr. Huxley's: "The important fact about Baudelaire is that he was essentially a Christian born out of his due time and a classicist born out of his due time." But a "Christian inside out" is a very different person from a "Christian born out of his due time"; Mr. Eliot's Baudelaire is a Christian whose faith has been weakened by the ideas current in his age; Mr. Huxley's is a fanatic in pursuit of the "absolute of evil."

Here I must end my survey of Baudelaire's critics; though both arbitrary and incomplete, it will serve to convey some of the outlines. Those who wish to continue the quest for the authentic Baudelaire should read other studies, especially those by Barrès, Gide, Soupault, du Bos, Fondane and Sartre. Already our Baudelaire is progressive and traditional, original and banal, classical and modern, a Christian, a Satanist and a materialist, a visionary, a consummate craftsman and a bad writer, a moralist and a man incapable of sincerity.

II

"Among the rights which have been discussed in recent times there is one which has been forgotten, which *everyone* is interested in establishing—the right to contradict oneself."—BAUDELAIRE

It would be easy enough to exorcise almost every one of these Baudelaires by quoting passages from his own works; it would be just as easy to select other passages which confirm the opinions of almost every one of the critics. At the present moment Hugo's conception of a democratic, if not a revolutionary, Baudelaire seems the most extravagant of all; in order to prove it so, we need only refer to one of many statements contained in his *Journaux Intimes*: "What can be more absurd than Progress, since man, as the event of each day proves, is always like and equal to himself—that is to say, always in a state of primitive savagery." We could also quote the following comment on Hugo made by Baudelaire towards the end of his life, in a letter from Brussels: "I should accept neither his glory nor his fortune if, at the same time, I were obliged to take over his vast absurdities." Even Hugo's assertion, however, is not wholly unfounded; not only did Baudelaire appear at the barricades in 1848, but he contributed

to two revolutionary manifestos published in that year. His essay on Dupont, the revolutionary poet, was written four years later; there can be no doubt that this essay expressed an admiration not confined to the artistic merits of Dupont. As for Victor Hugo, no eulogy could be more enthusiastic than Baudelaire's essay on him, published in 1861; evidently Baudelaire made ample use of "the right to contradict oneself." In *Mon Cœur Mis à Nu*, he noted: "Politics. I have no convictions, as men of my century understand the word, because I have no ambition," and interpreted his conduct in 1848 as "desire for revenge. Natural delight in demolition. Literary drunkenness, reminiscences of books read."

Baudelaire's *L'Art Romantique* abounds in pronouncements on aesthetics; the problem which preoccupied Baudelaire as a critic is the relationship between art and morality. In his essay on *L'Ecole Païenne* (1852) he concluded: "The time is not distant when it will be understood that all literature which refuses to march fraternally between science and philosophy is a homicidal and suicidal literature." Seven years later, in *Théophile Gautier*, he wrote: "Poetry cannot become assimilated to science or morality without dying or decaying; the object of poetry is not Truth, the object of poetry is Itself." We can hardly blame Baudelaire's critics for contradicting one another; Baudelaire himself, one of the most penetrating and brilliant critics of all times, was extraordinarily inconsistent. In *Pierre Dupont* (1852), he condemned the doctrine of "art for art's sake": "The puerile utopia of the school of Art for Art's sake, by excluding morality and often even passion, was inevitably sterile"; a later essay, *Barbier* (1861) contains the aphorism: "Poetry is sufficient unto itself."

Inconsistency is often mistaken for insincerity; "his criticism was truly creative," M. Soupault wrote of Baudelaire, and it is characteristic of the creative process that opposites must be clearly perceived before they can be reconciled. In a late essay, that on *Guy*s (1863), Baudelaire was able to combine the conflicting opinions expressed in earlier essays: "Beauty consists of an eternal and invariable element, the quality of which is extremely difficult to determine, and of a relative, incidental element which, if you like, will be the period, the fashion, morality or passion, each in turn or all at the same time." In the

same year Baudelaire wrote a letter to Swinburne, who had published a defence of the *Fleurs du Mal* in the *Spectator*; it is fortunate that this letter, which never reached Swinburne, has been recovered, for it contains an important comment on the moral intentions attributed to Baudelaire: "However, forgive me for telling you that you have gone a little too far in defending me. I am not as much of a *moralist* as you so obligingly pretend to believe. I simply believe 'like you, no doubt' that every poem, every work of art that is *well made* naturally and necessarily suggests *moral conclusions*. That is the reader's business. I even feel a very decided hatred for any exclusively moral *intention* in a poem."

Much of Baudelaire's originality is due to the violence of his thought; his mind was attracted to antithetical extremes, juggled with them, compared them and only rarely abandoned them in favour of a moderate solution. In this respect he resembled Nietzsche, another master (and victim) of antitheses. Baudelaire's attitude to religious matters was no more fixed than his attitude to politics, aesthetics or morality. Not only the Catholic orthodoxy which has been claimed for him, but his adherence to any faith which can be called Christian, is questionable. What, for instance, are we to make of this aphorism in *Fusées*: "God is the sole being who does not even need to exist in order to reign"? In 1861 Baudelaire wrote to his mother: "And God? you will say. With all my heart (with how great a sincerity no one can know except myself) I wish to believe that an external and invisible being is interested in my destiny, but how can I succeed in believing it?" Even in *Mon Cœur Mis à Nu*, the journal of his last years, we find a note which, though tentative, is characteristic of Baudelaire's mind: "*Theology*. What is the Fall? If it is unity become duality, it is God who has fallen. In other words, would not the creation be the fall of God?"

These examples could be multiplied, supported by argument or neutralized by other quotations; but it is not my object to add another Baudelaire to the collection, far less to discredit his critics or himself. What I wish to do is to make clear that most of those critics who have attempted to judge Baudelaire's opinions have selected only such evidence as fitted their respective themes. Antitheses, contradiction and paradox were the chief processes of Baudelaire's thought; it was from the conflict of opposites that

he derived creative energy. I have confined my attention to those works of Baudelaire in which the views expressed may reasonably be considered his own. *Les Fleurs du Mal*, the prose poems and *Les Paradis Artificiels* are even less accessible to interpretation in terms of ideas, beliefs and principles. The aesthetic value of these works will not be discussed; the opinions of Brunetière and Faguet on the subject no longer need to be refuted. If Baudelaire had been a poor, or an unequal craftsman, his achievement would be an even greater one. In order to win the admiration of Mallarmé and Valéry, a poor craftsman would have needed qualities unique even in the domain of the inexplicable.

Critics are too apt to resolve contradictions on the wrong level; if a different Baudelaire is conjured up in these pages, he should be, not a new one, but one who, reconstituted, has been permitted to retain some of the untidiness of the living.

III

"All books are immoral."—BAUDELAIRE

It is not the business of lyrical poets to think methodically—or to think at all, in the accepted sense of the word; poetic thought is intuitive and *emotional*, closer to that of a mystic than to that of a philosopher. Baudelaire thought not consistently but experimentally; *fusées* (rockets) was the name he gave to the aphorisms recorded in his journal—and the function of such fireworks is to amuse, to amaze, to inspire awe, if not fear. Those who are accustomed to a different kind of thought—the kind which takes off at a certain point and rises only in order to land at another point already determined—are likely to accuse Baudelaire of insincerity, frivolity or even charlatanism. In order to be wholly sincere, Baudelaire needed more than one identity; his *personae* included the dandy (and *dandyisme*, to Baudelaire, meant a whole creed centring around the *culte de soi-même*), the gentleman, the bohemian, the pariah, the clown, the criminal and the superman. He differed from other poets in his awareness of being all these and none of them. Every poet is full of contradictions; but Baudelaire was the first to subject himself to merciless criticism, to create and, at the same time, to observe the processes of creation:

Je suis la plaie et le couteau!
 Je suis le soufflet et la joue!
 Je suis les membres et la roue,
 Et la victime et le bourreau!

This heightened consciousness of his own duality, or rather multiplicity, is what makes Baudelaire so disturbing, so complex and so *modern* a writer. The aberrations described in *Les Fleurs du Mal* were anything but new; they had been implicit both in life and literature, but they had never been incorporated in the work of a writer who combined the flexibility of a poet with the strictness of a judge. (Since Baudelaire's time, the critical faculty has tended more and more to develop at the expense of the creative impulse, or vice versa; even Baudelaire, who maintained a precarious and admirable balance, was not a prolific writer. Minor poets nowadays seem to invite classification into those whose poems are treatises or critical essays put into verse and those who, in self-defence, endeavour to let their poetry flow like lava out of the unconscious.) While a part of him remained detached, Baudelaire never ceased to be capable of the self-abandonment required for creation. When he wrote that "art is prostitution"—and thereby likened it to love, which he defined in almost identical terms—he meant that the artist, at the moment of creation, is not a responsible being, but the instrument of whatever powers may be possessing him. These, according to Baudelaire, are more likely to be evil than good: "Evil is done without effort, *naturally*, by fatality; goodness is always the product of an art."

The statement that "all books are immoral" is only another comment on the dilemma with which Baudelaire's critical writings are so deeply concerned: where is the link between beauty and goodness? How, if there is no such link, can the artist serve both? And how can these two be reconciled with yet another of the artist's obligations, that to be truthful—neither to suppress nor to falsify his own experience of life for the sake of beauty or goodness?

Baudelaire made countless attempts to resolve this dilemma; no critic incapable of doing so will ever be able to judge more than the surface and accessories of his art. His own critical works, journals and correspondence are the only reliable means of approaching the problems relevant to his poetry; the contradictions contained in both prove that he attacked the same problems

constantly and from all sides and that he never succeeded in wholly solving them.

Baudelaire had the courage to expose his own weaknesses and the honesty to reveal the limitations of his art; more he could not do, short of renouncing poetry. "Every lyrical poet, by virtue of his nature, is fated to work for a return to the lost Eden," he remarked in his essay on Banville; in other words, the imagination of a lyrical poet moves in a realm which is beyond morality; every poet contains a pagan. Baudelaire recorded one vision of this realm in the *Fleurs du Mal*:

J'aime le souvenir de ces époques nues,
Dont Phoebus se plaisait à dorer les statues,
Alors l'homme et la femme en leur agilité
Jouissaient sans mensonge et sans anxiété,
Et, le ciel amoureux leur caressant l'échine,
Exerçaient la santé de leur noble machine. . . .

This may be Eden or a pagan Arcady; the imagination does not make distinctions of that kind.

Poets who live in an age of disruption cannot, as more fortunate poets can, employ that part of them which is pagan only in elaborating and embellishing a single message. As a moralist, Baudelaire did his best to stand apart from his age; but he could not sever himself from his own experience or wholly resist the influence which had formed his mind and nourished his imagination. The writers of the eighteenth century had made him sceptical; the Romantics—and especially Chateaubriand—had suggested tortuous possibilities to his imagination, as well as introducing him to the cult of Nature and impulse. Finally, Edgar Allan Poe and Paris—the two decisive influences—had educated his ingenuity and given him a taste for the latest refinements of depravity. Inasmuch as he set out to *interpret* his age, he had to know it, know it with his senses, as well as his brain; inasmuch as his purpose was poetic effect, he was what Barbey called him, a materialist. The imagination is omnivorous; to place it on too strict a diet, is to starve it.

In the same essay on Banville, Baudelaire wrote of the lyrical poet: "Out of ugliness and stupidity he will create a new kind of enchantment." If we apply this dictum to the *Fleurs du Mal*, we must conclude that, whatever his intentions may have been, his function, as a poet, was to enchant the reader. While it is possible

that, at a single moment, a reader may experience both aesthetic pleasure and moral disgust, one of the two sensations must outweigh the other; and even if we agree with Baudelaire that beauty is twofold, the fundamental contradiction remains unresolved. "I pity those poets who are guided only by instinct; I consider them incomplete." Baudelaire noted and, elsewhere, expressed contempt for those poets who look upon themselves as mere instruments; yet, better than anyone else, he knew that a poet's imagination—his power to re-create myth, discover new symbols and translate his own experience into significance—can be guided, but not commanded, by the intellect and the will.

THE VOGUE FOR JOHN AUBREY

By

PENNETHORNE HUGHES

EDMUND BLUNDEN has written in another context of "the herd instinct of literary labour," and something in the climate of criticism appears to have urged several writers to work in recent years, apparently unknown to each other, at assessment and editorship of the works of John Aubrey. As a result quite general readers can quote "of course as Aubrey says . . ." as was previously only the privilege of professional historians and amateur antiquarians. This contemporary interest in a seventeenth-century writer who has often been dismissed before as an amiable but unreliable gossip is perhaps worth examining.

Certainly for generations the warm opinion of Aubrey's many friends did not counteract, in assessing his gifts, the bitter views of his enemy (whom he himself counted a friend) Anthony Wood. Even the friends found him eccentric and "a little crazed,"

and Seldon, writing it is true to a Wood whose opinion he knew, spoke of "honest John Aubrey, whose head is so full that it will not give his tongue leave to utter one word after another. I assure you he is (to my appearance) as mad as anyone almost in the University of Bedlam." Wood himself, after their quarrel, tersely dismissed the man who had helped him so much as "a shiftlesse person, roving and magotie-headed." Wood was accepted as a scholar, if disliked as a man, and the label stuck. It remained in the eighteenth century, when the rising tide of rationalism and the idea of progress could only deplore Aubrey's passionate affection for the past, and his anxious enquiry into the curious—the marvels and supernatural manifestations set out in the only one of his books to be published in his lifetime, the *Miscellanies*. By the nineteenth century he had been relegated to the footnotes of learned works, and to a rather disparaging dismissal of him, by Isaac D'Israeli, as "the little Boswell of his day." Professional historians of course still read him, in manuscript at Oxford, or in the only available edition of the *Lives*, and some stock quotations were current—pieces about the "discovery" of Avebury, about Sir Walter Raleigh, about the attribution to Shakespeare of the paternity of Sir William Davenant, and from the *Miscellanies* the delightful anecdote of the apparition of 1670, not far from Cirencester, which "being demanded whether a good spirit, or a bad? returned no answer, but disappeared with a curious Perfume and most melodious Twang." He was pillaged, without acknowledgment, by J. H. Shorthouse and others. Meanwhile in Wiltshire Aubrey's antiquarian work was always remembered, and the first really informed biography, including a number of the *Lives* themselves, was the memoir, published in 1845 for the Wiltshire Topographical Society, by John Brittan. It was best succeeded by the *North Wiltshire Collections*, edited by Canon Jackson of Leigh Delamere, where Aubrey himself was first at school, in 1862. It was in the Old Rectory at Leigh Delamere, where Jackson had written his book, that many years ago I first read it, and was delighted to find how many of the Wiltshire names mentioned by Aubrey still existed locally. History in North Wiltshire is, to use Aubrey's description of his own family, "longaevous."

The present editors are not, so far as they show it, Wiltshiremen, and no doubt their interest began as ordinary men of letters. It

may have been stimulated, if certainly unsatisfied, by the *Scandals and Credulities of John Aubrey*, an entertaining skimming of the cream of Aubrey's anecdotes prepared by John Collier in 1931, which served up the scandals and evidenced the incredible omitted by the best edition to date, Andrew Clark's of 1897, but did not try to be any serious assessment. Or their interest may have been life-long. At all events we now have a history of *John Aubrey and his Friends* by Mr. Anthony Powell, who has also made an edited collection of the *Lives and other selected writings*, and there is another "definitive" edition of the *Lives* by Mr. Lawson-Dick. Mr. Powell discovered in the course of his own work that Mr. James Williams was contemplating one with the same title as his own, and altogether the ground has now been gone over pretty thoroughly. All has not yet been published, in spite of the enthusiasm of the publishers' blurbs, but there is enough to content everyone but the research student, at least until, if they ever do, one or two lost manuscripts turn up in the sale rooms or America. Mr. Lawson-Dick's work, indeed, may well represent the edition of his notes and jottings which Aubrey himself wished and foresaw would some day be made. It is gratifying to amateurs of Aubrey that his rehabilitation has been so well done, for he has given us much, and as he himself says "methinkes it shewes a kind of gratitude to revise the memories and memorialls of the pious and charitable Benefactors dead and gone." It remains to see why it should so particularly have been done at this moment.

Essentially it is perhaps because Aubrey's interests are well suited to the temper of our own age, whilst his style is now more acceptable than when literary reputation depended upon considered and sustained writing. Aubrey saw history in biological, social, and topographical terms, and recorded it in personal notes. Moreover, whilst he had his principles and his prejudices, he was essentially a reporter and not a propagandist. He admired the Roman Church, and was by temperament a royalist. But he noted what he saw and heard without moralization. He was profoundly individual in his wide queer interests.

John Aubrey was born on March 12, 1626, at Easton Pierse, near Kington St. Michael, between Chippenham and Malmesbury. His family claimed Norman-Welsh descent, which was likely enough, even if the origins were not so illustrious as they

asserted. His great-grandfather, Dr. William Aubrey, had been a distinguished legal figure in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and had made a lot of money, which then declined through successive generations, perhaps as part of the general economic situation, perhaps through the financial fecklessness which John Aubrey himself inherited. His own grandfather had married one of the Wiltshire Danvers, and like so many families from the Marches the Aubreys settled in the cloth country of North Wiltshire where much of the wool of the sheep from Wales was processed. There was still enough money for Richard Aubrey, John's father, to rebuild Easton Pierse (we have his son's sketches of it before and after the operation), but that seems to have exhausted most of the family fortune. On the other side too he was well-connected, his mother being one of the Lytes of Somerset, so that from his old grandfather, Isaac Lyte, he learnt many stories of the famous Elizabethans.

Aubrey had a lonely and unhappy childhood in "eremitical solitude." He speaks little of his mother, although he was deeply affected by her death when it came, and his father was cold, sick, and preoccupied. He resented his son's studious interests, which the boy was therefore forced to conduct on horseback or in the privy. His nearest brother was fifteen years younger than himself, and there were no friends of his own age. Moreover he had a stutter, which worried him all his life, and a seasonal pain in the head and side which left him as he grew older. He was however well grounded in the classics by one of the best schoolmasters of the time, a Mr. Latimer, whose prize pupil had been Thomas Hobbes, also of Malmesbury. Later he went to school at Blandford, into a rough world of ferocious whipping and horse-play which influenced his own views when he came to write his liberal *Idea of the Education of a Young Gentleman*.

In 1642, when he was seventeen years old, Aubrey went up to Trinity College, Oxford, and he was supremely happy there, until the outbreak of the Civil War made it dangerous to remain. Then he was able, still in 1642, to persuade his father to let him go as a student to the Middle Temple. He never took a fellowship, and he never practised the law, but the friends he made in this brief period gave him an introduction into the sophisticated world of which he always remained a member, if usually a country member. When he left London in 1648 owing to the

illness of his father, who died four years later, he gave up the only period of his life which was reasonably free from cares. From this time onwards, whilst there were events, projects, abortive love affairs, and increasing antiquarian researches, he was usually in debt, pain, or litigation of one sort or another. He retained old friends, and made new ones, and he wrote the things for which we now remember him. But he was a perpetually harassed, and materially at least never a happy man.

The first of the things for which we are grateful to him is perhaps his "discovery" of Avebury, in that year 1648, which by itself makes him a founder of British archaeology. A company of Wiltshire gentlemen were out hunting, and Aubrey was one of them. They were mainly of the Royalist party, and they may have been as interested in plotting as in their quarry. But Aubrey was innocent of any such political overtones, and when the game led them to Avebury, he was "wonderfully surprised at the sight of these vast stones, of which I had never heard before." He left the company, entertaining himself with "a more delightful indagation," and after later studies produced sketches of the site, and more intelligent ideas about it than were entertained until very recently. Most people nowadays would agree with his estimate that Avebury is more impressive than Stonehenge, and it is pleasant to think how delighted Aubrey would be to see this greatest and perhaps oldest of our monuments in good hands, after the ignorant depredations of eighteenth-century farmers, and the indifference of nineteenth-century landlords.

Meanwhile he was pursuing his interest in the evidences of the past in every direction, probing, writing letters and receiving them, about antiquarian and occult occurrences. Since we still have a tendency sometimes to think of these interests as "folklore"—the word was not invented until 1846—and the pre-occupation of elderly clergymen and schoolmasters, it is worth emphasizing that Aubrey was still in his early twenties. But the taste had indeed been there all his life, and even "when a Boy" he writes "I did ever love to converse with old men, as Living Histories." He also liked converse with young women, and his life was perhaps largely coloured by the love he bore, about this time, for "that incomparable good conditioned gentlewoman Mrs. M. Wiseman with whom at first sight I was in love—*haeret lateri*." In his will he bequeathed to her his best diamond ring, and it seems that in

his heart he never forgot her, though she refused him in order to marry a neighbour.

After Richard Aubrey's death in 1652 his son inherited property, hopelessly encumbered, in Wiltshire, Herefordshire, Brecon, and Monmouth, and found himself caught up in long, tedious, and unprofitable lawsuits. He was pursued by creditors, and his life generally was "labouring under a crowd of ill directions," which he attributed to the astrological conditions at his birth. We may see it perhaps as the fairly common lot of a scholarly gentleman of the period, when the various social and economic revolutions of the mid-seventeenth century destroyed so many of the old family fortunes, where not repaired by a commercial instinct or personal pushfulness which Aubrey certainly lacked. He was in fact fortunate that he did never get into serious political trouble, in spite of a knack of finding himself in the company of Roman Catholics or Royalists just at a time when his friends were attracting dangerous attention to themselves. Yet his interests were wide enough, and about this period he was one of the circle who gathered round James Harrington at Miles's Coffee House, talking of political ideals and philosophical projects which were emphatically left-wing. Meanwhile, when not in London, he lived quietly at Broad Chalke, in the south of Wiltshire, making notes of antiquarian discoveries and such odd occurrences as came to his ears. A marriage which would have brought him some money fell through owing to the lady's death, and other relations with women temporarily affected his health. Meanwhile his mother used her influence, to his subsequent deep regret, to prevent his travelling on the continent, and it was ten years before he did so.

He was however travelling extensively at home, and especially riding up and down the county of Wiltshire, compiling the notes and copying the heraldic inscriptions for his description of the Northern Division he already knew so well. This was the result—the only result, for the others apparently lost interest—of a project at a meeting of the gentlemen of the county at Devizes in 1659–60. The meeting was to choose the Knights of the Shire, but it was further agreed, perhaps at Aubrey's insistence, to compile a history of the county. The introduction to Aubrey's account of the Northern Division is the best sustained writing of his that we possess, and the local records, although Aubrey's memory was

often faulty in detail, show a gift of detailed observation, certainly, but still more his deep feeling and sympathy for the past. It is this essential bias which makes him a rather strange, if worthy, figure of the Royal Society, of which newly formed body he was elected a member in 1663. For the Society, although its hundred odd members included the most brilliant people of the age in many departments of learning—and a scholar was still a “full man,” not a specialist ignorant of the main stream of knowledge—was “progressive.” Its object was “the promoting of Physico-Mathematicall-Experimentall Learning” and its interests were in scientific prospecting. It had small confidence in spirits and marvels. Aubrey was fascinated by spirits and marvels; although, accepting the temper of his intellectual associates, he was prepared to report them from evidence, rather than, as had earlier ages, accept them as a tenet of faith. At all events, he greatly valued his membership of the Society, and the company he met there, and it was through this that he was invited to show Avebury to Charles II, who commissioned him to survey it, and also showed an interest in Silbury Hill. Here (it was incidentally, from Aubrey’s sketches, far more pointed than to-day) the Duke of York rather typically noted a particular breed of large snails, which he requested Aubrey to collect for the admiration and appetite of the Duchess.

Aubrey now further complicated his life, and ruined his finances by a disastrous entanglement with Joan Sumner, the sister of a wealthy clothier at Seend, where Aubrey had been staying and investigating the medicinal properties of the waters. He became engaged to her, and on the strength of it there were various financial negotiations which involved anticipating some of her marriage portion in order to pay off the mortgage on Easton Pierse. Aubrey seems to have been muddled about it, and Joan Sumner, a lady with a taste for the law-courts of which we have other evidence, was very clear if not perhaps very honest. At all events she took him to court. He won his case, but lost his money, and in 1671 Easton Pierse had to be sold. He also quarrelled with his brother. Broad Chalke was mortgaged up to the hilt, and altogether his affairs were more than ever “at kim-kam.”

Because Aubrey chronicled all these troubles, often with a wry humour, it is possible that something too much can be made of them by biographers. He was a harassed man financially it is true,

and not blessed with any permanence in his relations with women. But he was a scholar and had plenty of connections, and for such men there was always board somewhere, during the seventeenth century (although Aubrey deplored the loss of monastic rest-houses). He was intensely social, and he had a wide circle of friends amongst the most interesting men in the country, at one of its most stimulating periods. He usually had wine (sometimes too much), and he never had boredom. If he never had living means either, his powerful friends, the Earl of Thanet, Edmund Wyld, Sir Christopher Wren, and Sir James and Lady Long of Draycot, gave money, *otium*, or advice. He was grateful for the financial help, and for houses in which to stay: but the advice tended to be confusing. He listed at one time sixty-two "projects" from which he hoped to make money or fame, and very sensible many of them were, including a plan for the first real census and survey of the country. He dallied with the idea of emigration, and was indeed given a small estate in Tobago: he wondered if he would not take a clerical sinecure. And in the end he did none of these things, but travelled, and scribbled his notes and wrote his letters, and made the round of his friends. In 1673, however, he had, it is true, become deputy to the King's Cosmographer.

Meanwhile he had become involved in half a lifetime of correspondence with Anthony Wood, who ill requited it in life and whose sour comments did so much harm to Aubrey's name after their deaths. Wood had first called on Aubrey's assistance in 1669, when he found himself more than grateful for the help of this friend of his younger brother. Wood was a recluse scholar, of gifts, but with a censorious tongue and a lack of social graces which made it hard for him to obtain the ready help of others. Aubrey's co-operation was therefore invaluable. It was readily given, and in 1680 Aubrey sent Wood the manuscript of his *Lives*, as material for the *Athenae*, then in preparation. When this was published in 1691, and Wood found himself in trouble with the Oxford authorities, and with charges of libel levelled at him, he hastily destroyed some forty pages of the manuscript. Aubrey was immensely distressed, and although he wrote and spoke generously of Wood when the cantankerous old scholar died, the rift and the various complications of it (in which Wood certainly behaved atrociously) clouded what Aubrey had felt to be a most profitable association. Meanwhile he was beginning to find him-

self an old man. Hobbes, whom he had so much revered, and whose life he was writing, had died in 1679. There was still the fear of arrest. He was attacked by footpads in 1692, and was lucky to survive. In 1694 there came apoplexy.

His last years were concerned with securing the safety of his precious manuscripts. In 1697 he was on his way to stay with his old friends the Longs when another attack struck him near Oxford. He was buried there, decently but obscurely: a kindly, industrious, untidy-minded magpie of a man, liked with tolerance but hardly reverence by his fellows of the Royal Society, as an amiable antiquarian from Wiltshire.

Certainly few at the time considered him a genius. His admirers call him that to-day, but it is perhaps unprofitable to quibble about the word. Now that he has been resuscitated, dusted, ordered and established it is likely that he may be remembered as constantly, and quoted as much as his business-like contemporary, Samuel Pepys. Pepys is best known for what he meant to hide: about Aubrey everything was open, and the most efficient thing that he ever did was to preserve his papers.

His greatest claim to fame must be as a social historian. It is evident in the sustained passages of the writing about Wiltshire. This description of the golden days of his grandfather is often quoted, but it is an excellent example of Aubrey at his best:

Lent was a dismal time: strictly observed by fasting, prayer, and confessing against Easter. During the forty days the friars preached every day. Before the Reformation pulpits were generally stone. Severall were in my boyhood altered. This country was very full of religious howses. A man could not have travelled but he must have mett monkes, fryars, bonhommes &c., in their severall habitts, black, white, and gray: and the tingle-tangle of their convent bells I fancie made very pretty music, like the college bells at Oxon. There were no free schools. The boys were educated at the monasteries. Mr. Meredith Lloyd saies that in Wales before the Reformation every man almost, of any fashion, could speak Latin. They learned it at the monasteries, where they spake of duty. I believe the same might be said of England.

The young mayds were brought up (not at Hakney, Sarum Schools, &c., to learn pride and wantonnesse, but) at the nunneries, where they had examples of piety, and humility and modesty and obedience to imitate and to practice. Here they learned needlework, the art of confectionary, surgery (anciently no apothecaries or

surgeons—the gentlewomen did cure their poore neighbours: their hands are now too fine), physick, writing, drawing. Old Jacques could see from his howse the nunnes of the Priory come forth in the nymph-hay with their rocks and wheeles to spinne: and with their soweing work. He would say that he hath told threescore and ten: but of nunnes there were not so many, but in all, with lay sisters, as widowes, old maydes, and young girles, there might be such a number. This was a fine way of breeding up young woemen, who are led more by example than precept: and a good retirement for widowes and grave single woemen to a civill, virtuous, and holy life.

That may be considered writing, and with a sense of selection. But the observation of current life and habit, the mixture of graciousness and boorishness, pops up everywhere in the *Lives*: a portrait of an age that is all the better for not being worked over. It is this quality of being a reporter's notes, and those of a scholarly and sympathetic reporter, which makes Aubrey's writing so attractive to us in this generation. The essential detail is there, and if the date is wrong then probably Aubrey has a *quaere* against it. It is in any case fairly unimportant. It might be argued that notes are often better than their worked-up results, as the cartoons of all but the greatest artists tend to promise more than emerges from the final picture. Yet Aubrey could certainly write well when he tried. Even his detractors never challenged it, and he may obscurely have been aware of the tautness that lay in these scribbled anecdotes and judgments, mixed up with the fascinating verbal decoration that came so happily to the seventeenth-century writer. The editors of the current editions have of course tidied up much: but what is now published of the *Lives* is his writing as Aubrey would probably have wished to see it. So far as the facts are concerned, they can be checked, where this is possible now, in footnote, and it is far better to have the stories and memories which Aubrey set out as they exist, than to have missed them because in the conditions of his time they were not immediately susceptible to checking. As he said, stories were set down "tumultuarily, as they occurred to my thoughts, or as occasionally I had information of them." When he *could* check he seems to have taken great pains to do so, as is evident in his detailed description of the birthplace of Hobbes at Malmesbury. Reporters to-day have not a much better record, and except when he was writing

for Wood, Aubrey's observations were not subject to the truncations and second opinions imposed by an editorial policy.

It has been said that Aubrey has never been forgotten as an antiquarian, especially in Wiltshire. But topography and antiquarianism are now in high favour. There have never been so many county books, of varying merit. Schools now study their local history as a prelude to that of their country and the world. Regionalism is in fashion, and recognized as a necessary and for too long neglected complement to universalism. Aubrey was not of course the first topographer in England, but he was one of the best, and the first county archaeological society has its origins in the meeting of those gentlemen of Wiltshire in 1648, of whom Aubrey was the only one to produce actual results. He was not merely interested in tombs and inscriptions, great houses and great men, but in the soil and history that conditioned them. He had a sense of continuity and of locality.

There remains the charge of credulity. Certainly Aubrey was fascinated by astrology and by numerology, by magic, and by curious evidences of the supernatural or materially abnormal. This, which seemed addle-pated superstition to the Victorians, if anything helps Aubrey's reputation to-day. He would have defended his own view of ghostly manifestation quite simply: "the Divines say 'Deny Spirits, you are an atheist'." To-day such reasoning may for many have lost its obvious truth. But superstition and the love of marvels is having its vogue. The shiny monthly periodicals compete for articles on poltergeists, and report avidly the raining of frogs. Astrologists claim that their numbers are increasing. All this is on a low level enough. But on another there is an obvious reaction setting in against the materialist and "scientific" values of the nineteenth century, which are full-blossoming in such terrifying forms of destruction. At all events, nowadays the study of the inter-relation of spirit and matter, and evidence of it, are subjects of necessary enough pre-occupation. They were this to Aubrey, and it was evidence he collected, not interpretation. He was a reflector only. As he said of himself as a child, he had "Phansie like a Mirrour, pure chrystal water which the least wind does disorder and unsmooth."

As he has been, Aubrey will always be remembered, and continuously read, for the *Brief Lives*, and perhaps the *Miscellanies*. *The Natural History of Wiltshire* remains a classic work of anti-

quarianism, and to-day the booksellers ask you vast sums for *A Perambulation of the County of Surrey*, which Aubrey wrote in 1673, and which was printed first in 1718. *The Country Revell*, a satirical play, is never likely to be acted, but the theory of education, and the *Remaines of Gentilisme* will be quoted. Many of Aubrey's other mixed and unfinished papers are there for the student, in the Bodleian Library.

John Aubrey will always have his devotees, for he was a lovable writer. He must always have his students, for there is much in his anecdote that cannot be found anywhere else, and more that cannot elsewhere be found so conveniently and agreeably. Wiltshiremen will always be proud of him. And, until the temper of the literate mind radically changes, the general reader will have excellent access to him in the work of editing so thoroughly carried out in this generation. The general reader, and perhaps there are more than one, is likely to welcome it.

On the downs near Broad Chalke is still a barrow near which Aubrey often thought he might like to be buried. He lies, however, in the Parish Church of St. Mary Magdalene at Oxford. The register records "1697. John Aubrey A stranger was Buryed June 7th." But he was no stranger, and is perhaps as happy there. He was a humble man, and he would probably be surprised as well as pleased that his "rude and hasty collections" are, as he doubtfully hoped, at last an established part of our history and our literature, nearly three hundred years after his death.

REVIEWS

THE NATURE OF CATHOLICISM

Catholicism, by Henri de Lubac, S.J. (Burns and Oates 16s).

'CATHOLICISME' was first published in France in 1937, and it is from the fourth edition of 1946 that this careful and accurate translation by Lancelot C. Sheppard has been made. To English readers the title may suggest a general explanation of the Church. This is far from P. de Lubac's intention. To be Catholic is to be more than individual, and the purpose of the book is to open a window on the comprehensive and communal character of Catholicism. "The splendid name of Catholic, that has been so fittingly translated by 'comprehensive,' a term 'as full of welcome as outstretched arms, far-reaching like the works of God, a term of wonderful richness, filled with echoes of the infinite,' has not always been perfectly grasped even by the Church's own children." In successive strokes this sense of Catholicism is depicted, so that by the end of the book we have before us a picture of a universal society which refuses nothing human and whose members are truly persons when joined together in the closest interdependence. Every man is an image of God, and this fact straightway constitutes a society, for as Ruysbroeck says, "we are all one, intimately united in one eternal image, which is the image of God." This primal unity of the image has, however, been shattered into pieces by sin, and mankind now consists of a multitude of individuals. God's intention is to reform this image in the likeness of His Son. The Church is this intention in action, and that is why it is "Jesus Christ spread abroad and communicated"; it is the summons, the "convocatio," of mankind into one body, and its universality is prescribed because, in the words of Clement of Alexandria: "In the same way that the will of God is an act and it is called the world, so His intention is the salvation of men, and it is called the Church." The Church is more than a disciplined society of divine origin, for "if Christ is the sacrament of God, the Church is for us the sacrament of Christ, and the faithful are truly present to each other and the good of each is the good of all."

The Church, therefore, has a unity and comprehensiveness like that of mankind, but higher and more intimate. As Claudel says: "There are many souls, but there is not one of them with whom I am not in communion in that sacred apex where it utters its Pater Noster." The full doctrine of the Sacraments bears this truth out. Baptism is not only the admission of an individual to the Church; it is a kind of "concorporation" of the whole Church in one mysterious unity. By Penance the sinner returns to the "communion" of saints. Above all

shines the Holy Eucharist as the sacrament of unity. This aspect of the Eucharist has already been made familiar to us by the work of modern theologians like de la Taille and Masure. P. de Lubac places the same doctrine in the widest of contexts. Life after death, for instance, is not to be thought of in terms of a mere individual happiness. Heaven is the city, the court, the meeting-place of the blessed under one Head, where "erit unus Christus amans seipsum." One is reminded of the saying of Lacordaire that love has but one word to utter and it never repeats itself. So strong was the belief in ancient times in this unity of the blessed that some early Catholic teachers, including perhaps St. Bernard and certainly Pope John XXII, were tempted to say that the dead would not enter into perfect bliss until the end of the world, when, the number of the elect being completed, "the members of Christ," in Origen's words, "will be knitted together, joint to joint, each one in his place, and the multitude of members will form at last, completely and in full reality, one Single Body." This opinion is mistaken, but it bears witness to the vivid sense of community, and also to the intimate bonds which join the Church triumphant and the Church militant.

As then the Church has no boundaries of time or race it is natural to look for its influence and shadow in the Old Testament and in all history. Whereas other religions have as their basis "an individualistic doctrine of escape," Catholicism meets history and nature, turns mere facts into events and gives to nature a promise of meaning and fulfilment. Time passes away, but it is not vanity; it is a servant and has to be employed because history provides the "stages of an essentially collective salvation." Above all the history of Israel had to be read in the light of what is to come. It anticipates and forecasts Christianity, and the Fathers saw in it the prevenient action of God, the Corpus Ecclesiae already in process of formation in the midst of strange races who also were to play their part in the resurrection of the whole world. This salvation of the unbelievers is to all Catholics a poignant mystery, and P. de Lubac devotes a chapter to the problem. He is fully aware of the apparent dilemma: either the Church is the one ark of salvation, and then the unbeliever is excluded; or salvation is accessible to the unbeliever, and then the purpose and the very necessity of the Church seem to vanish altogether. Its *raison d'être* has ceased. To understand the answer I will quote some passages from different parts of this book which will throw light on the function of the Church in the world and also bring out the comprehensiveness of its mission. "The salvation of the world is confided to the Church; hoc enim Ecclesiae creditum est Dei munus. Now this is no arbitrary divine edict. For definitively the Church is nothing else than humanity itself, enlivened, unified by the Spirit of Christ. She was willed by God in

order to give life to creation." "Catholicism is religion itself. It is the form that humanity must put on in order finally to be itself. It is the only reality which involves by its existence no opposition. It is therefore the very opposite of a 'closed society'." "The whole world taken up by man and made one with his destiny—man in his turn, in the whole stupendous complexity of his history, taken up by the Church; the world made spiritual by man, and man consecrated by the Church; the Church, in fine, holy, spiritual, world-wide, like an immense ship laden with all the fruits of the earth, will enter upon eternity." These quotations give us the relevance of the Church, as P. de Lubac understands it, to nature, history and human culture. But they also declare that the good in mankind and men's hopes reside in the presence of the Church, whose power overshadows creation and "gives life and that more abundantly." The human race is one, and its salvation "consists in its receiving the form of Christ, and that is possible only through the Catholic Church." The best in humanity is a lesser good, and it is kept from ultimate nothingness only through the grace of the Church drawing it into its supernatural fulfilment. The long slow development of man in time is part of one plan whose culmination is Christ. In the Gospel genealogy of Christ it is not without significance that a gentile is to be found, and in the preparation for the Gospel news the world was in travail and the good pagan laboured. The missionary in a pagan land brings salvation not only to those who hear his words, but also to the long generations of ancestors, to the "whole nameless mass of those who, from the beginnings of our race, have done their best in that darkness or half-light that was their lot." And, moreover, it is not only the missionary who has to be the light of the pagan world. Every member of the Church by definition is *Christus amans seipsum* and has to take up the burden of humanity. "All grace is given *gratia gratis data*, that is, in the old meaning of the expression, given for the sake of others. . . . Fidelity to that grace by which we are members of the Church makes two demands upon us: we must co-operate in that collective salvation of the world by taking part, each in accordance with his own vocation, in the construction of that great building of which we must be at once the workmen and the stones; at the same time we must co-operate, by the impact of our whole Christian life, in the individual salvation of those who remain apparently 'unbelievers.'"

The last chapters of *Catholicism* are devoted to such subjects as the present opportunity of the Church in its Catholic, all-embracing function, the relation of Person to Society, and the infinitely superior quality of the Church's one society to all human rivals. Communism cannot hope to be all-embracing, to be the bond of humanity. Its eyes are on the future; it makes demands on the living that a coming

generation may be called blessed. The masses of the dead and of the present are no more than manure for a harvest which is to come. Communism and other secular ideals are defeated by time and cannot be representative of humanity; "it is the Eternal found at the heart of all temporal development which gives it life and direction. It is the authentic Present without which the present itself is like the dust which slips through our hands." The Church alone reaches out to both the dead and the living and redeems the passing moment from emptiness. Mankind with its long story has no unity save in God and His timeless society. What is more, the Christian conception of unity alone allows the individual to remain a person and at the same time belong to a living whole. As P. de Lubac points out with justice and discernment, "the higher a living thing rises in the scale of being the more internal unity does it acquire." In a primitive organism the unity is feeble and the parts have hardly any differentiation; but higher up in the scale of living things "the distinction between the different parts of a being stands out the more clearly as the union of these parts is closer." In human society this paradox becomes more pronounced. Where men lose their personal dignity in a group that group is subhuman; but where human beings truly love one another they form the closest of unions and do not lose but gain. It would seem, therefore, that individualism is an inferior status, and that to be properly a person one must depend on another and be other-regarding. "It is clear, then, that each person by itself does not constitute a final end, is not a positive, independent little world: God does not love us as so many separate beings—*Societas quiddam est humana natura*."

P. de Lubac's writing has a quiet wisdom which almost conceals the originality of his thought. He likes texts and he keeps close to history; he fingers lovingly the precious stones of the past and turns them to the light so as to show us the many-splendoured beauty of Catholicism. If there be a weakness in this method it lies in his copious quotations from the writings of the Fathers. Nearly eighty pages are reserved for extracts from them at the end of the book. Long acquaintance with these early writers has, I think, caused P. de Lubac to forget that the quaintness and rhetoric of some of the Fathers are not to everybody's taste. Absorbed, too, as he is in the doctrines of the unity of mankind and of the Mystical Body he leaves the reader a little uncomfortable at times about the precise significance and justification of abstract terms and conceptions, and he tends to underestimate the unyielding core of individualism in all of us. As he says himself: "Great care must be taken lest it (the Mystical Body) should give the impression of being merely a passing craze. Many are already growing impatient with the new scholasticism, the mixture of abstractions and metaphors in which it tends to be entangled." Such doctrines when first appreciated give

a joy to the mind, but many individuals seem incapable of such apprehensions and insights, and they do not find these high ideas efficacious in their lonely struggles with themselves. Moreover, the contrast between the beauty and charity inherent in the Church as portrayed in these pages and its life as we live and know it in a world of sin raises new perplexities. In her day St. Catharine of Siena sorrowed over this contrast and straightway sought to remedy it by self-sacrifice and by every means in her power. This may well be the proper and only answer to a problem which is individual as well as general.

M. C. D'ARCY

INTRODUCTION TO PLATO

The Philosophy of Plato, by G. C. Field (Oxford University Press 5s).

THIS new addition to the Home University Library merits an unqualified welcome. Professor Field has performed successfully the difficult task of giving a clear account of Plato's philosophy without forcing it into the mould of a "system," and of suggesting the permanent philosophic relevance of the leading problems considered by Plato without making him ask or answer questions which belong to another age and another climate of thought. The book is an admirable introduction to Plato's thought.

I think that Professor Field is quite right in saying of Plato that "his central interest throughout his life was the practical one of the reform of society." But Plato was no pragmatist; he was convinced that no real reform of society is possible unless it is inspired by a clear knowledge of objective truth, of objective norms and ideals; and the author brings out this fact very well. He also takes a very sane view of Plato's strictures on "democracy"; and he rightly criticizes those attacks on Plato's political ideas which are based implicitly on the notion that one can profitably take a Greek thinker out of his own setting and make him a participant in modern political controversies. Some of these attacks, says Professor Field, "have been carried on with a degree of misrepresentation, misstatement and misquotation which ought to discredit even a party politician."

As the author argues, we shall not get much out of Plato if we proceed on the assumption that, in order to get value out of a philosopher, "we must be able to extract from his works a series of definite propositions which we can accept as true in preference to another set of propositions that we had previously accepted and are now prepared to abandon." I certainly have no intention of questioning the value of the approach to philosophy through the intensive study of a great philosopher's system. But one does not become a philosopher

by learning a series of propositions and arguments: one becomes a philosopher when some philosophic problem becomes a real problem for one, and when one brings to bear on its solution one's own intellectual activity. It is here that Plato's writings can be of real service. For they present us with actual philosophic inquiries and concrete philosophic thinking, rather than with "results." If one looks for "results" in Plato, one will very possibly be disappointed; but the contact with a great mind that an understanding study of the Platonic dialogues affords can be a powerful and valuable stimulus even to those whose general philosophic outlook is different from that of Plato. It is highly probable that the famous passage in the seventh *Letter* (assuming the authenticity of the *Letter*), about the deep matters of philosophy not being communicable by words, like other sciences, does not refer to any doctrine of mystical experience but indicates simply Plato's conviction that philosophy does not consist of informative propositions which one can receive passively and learn by heart. It is only by actual philosophic thinking and by the contact of mind with mind that one comes to "see" or, as Plato puts it, that "a light is lit in the soul . . . and thenceforward feeds itself."

I should be inclined to question Professor Field's identification of the Artificer and the World-soul of the *Timaeus*. I should also hesitate to accept his view that for Plato individual human souls proceed from the world-soul and eventually return into it. But a good case can certainly be made out for both views; and it is impossible to attain definitive knowledge of what Plato really thought on these matters. One small point may be mentioned in conclusion. The author, speaking of the education of the Guardians in the *Republic*, says that their educational ascent, including apparently the apprehension of the supreme principle, the Form of the Good, is completed about the age of thirty-five. It may be that the study of dialectic from the age of thirty to that of thirty-five was meant to include the apprehension of the absolute Good; but it seems to me that the natural meaning of the relevant passages of the *Republic* is that it is not until they have attained the age of fifty, after, that is to say, the period of practical probation in the "den," that the Guardians are to lift up the eyes of their souls "to the universal light . . . and behold the absolute Good." Not, however, that it matters much which interpretation is correct.

FREDERICK C. COPLESTON

BYZANTINE PAINTING

Byzantine Painting, with an introduction and notes by Gervase Mathew (Faber 8s 6d).

THE title of this book is most misleading, in any case as far as the plates are concerned, for no attempt has been made to give an idea of the whole story of Byzantine painting or even of that portion of it which Father Mathew associates with the term Byzantine, that is to say, the art of post-ninth-century date. The plates, moreover, with one exception, all depict miniatures from manuscripts and the manuscripts chosen are not in any way typical of the various great "schools" of Byzantine art, but have been selected, it would seem, because they are easy of access; all of them are from manuscripts preserved in the British Museum or at Oxford. This is not to say, however, that the manuscripts are not worthy of reproduction. Actually a number of them are extremely fine, and one is glad to see coloured plates of paintings which are unfamiliar, some even unknown.

Each of the plates is accompanied by a note of some three hundred words. These notes are clear and lucid, but they do not always explain why the illustration was selected. Plate 7, for example, from the Latin Psalter, known as Queen Melisanda's Psalter, is a Byzantinizing rather than a purely Byzantine work; Plate 9 is unusual, and is in addition of an extremely sombre painting, and it seems a pity to have wasted a coloured plate on this subject, for it would have been just as effective in monochrome; and though the icon in the Ashmolean Museum which is illustrated on Plate 10 is quite a good one, it is hardly good enough as a work of art to have been chosen as one of ten pictures to represent the glory of Byzantine painting. And why is Plate 8 entitled "The Evangelist," a meaningless title in this context, especially so when the subject of the picture, St. John, has his name clearly written beside his head?

The other plates, on the other hand, reproduce works of great interest and great merit. Plate 1, St. Luke from a tenth-century manuscript in the British Museum, is especially beautiful, and is an admirable example of the full glory of Byzantine colouring. Father Mathew's introduction, again, is extremely stimulating. He succeeds in giving a very great deal of useful information in a very short space, and at the same time his text is vivid and delightful. Surely every one who reads it will wish to pursue the subject further. It is a pity that there is no short bibliography to help in accomplishing such an aim.

D. TALBOT RICE

SACRED AND PROFANE LOVE

Selected Poems of Algernon Charles Swinburne, with an introduction by Humphrey Hare (Heinemann 12s 6d).

The Darkling Plain: Romanticism in English Poetry from Darley to Yeats, by John Heath-Stubbs (Eyre and Spottiswoode 10s 6d).

MR. HUMPHREY HARE, who recently published a biographical study of Swinburne, has now edited and selected an ambitious selection of this poet's verse. His selection is made with admirable taste and the book is beautifully produced, but the appearance of this volume raises the question: "Does Swinburne mean anything to the modern generation of readers?" After carefully reading through this book, I am afraid that the answer would appear to be in the negative, or very little.

Swinburne has found a passionate and able advocate in Mr. Hare. In a long and well-written introduction, he does everything within his power to make a good case for a revival of interest in Swinburne's work. Invoking the current mania for psychological explanations of the great Victorian poets, Mr. Hare gives us absorbing, if sometimes disturbing details, about Swinburne's private life. Undoubtedly, it is necessary to have some understanding of the poet's abnormal tendencies to appreciate certain passages in this poet's work but I do feel a great poet must stand or fall by the intrinsic quality of his verse. We admire the poetry of Hopkins and Tennyson because it is noble and beautiful, and not because we have interesting information about their private lives.

Was Swinburne a great poet? On the credit side, it can be conceded that he was one of the most musical of English poets. He had a magnificent gift of language, and *Atalanta in Calydon* remains a work of genius. Certain of the shorter poems, too, such as *The Garden of Proserpine*, *A Forsaken Garden*, and *To a Seamew*, have a magical, sad beauty which has rightly earned them a place in most poetry anthologies. But on the debit side, we can ask ourselves whether sheer beauty and musical versification is enough to warrant greatness. What are we to think of *Dolores*, *Faustine*, and *Anactoria*? Stripped of their verbal magnificence, these ambitious poems are terrifying studies in perverse love, but they add nothing to our understanding of the ennobling qualities of love or of life in general. Examining them coldly, these poems are unreal and mean little to a modern audience. I venture to think that the distracted contemporary world demands more of poetry. Swinburne was a master of musical verse but his philosophy remains sterile and pathetically puerile in its straining after sensation.

The Darkling Plain by the gifted young poet, John Heath-Stubbs, is an outstanding work of literary criticism, "A study of the later for-

tunes of romanticism in English poetry from George Darley to W. B. Yeats," it is both challenging and stimulating in its judgments. Good poets usually make discriminating critics and Mr. Heath-Stubbs is no exception. He is no respecter of established reputations, and some readers may feel that he is unduly harsh to Tennyson and Browning, but the manner in which he traces the influence of romanticism on the poetry of the nineteenth century is quite masterly.

One of the most refreshing aspects of these critical studies is the manner in which the author throws new light on such unjustly neglected poets as George Darley and Thomas Lovell Beddoes. Indeed, Mr. Heath-Stubbs's penetrating analysis of the principal works of these two romantic poets is amongst the best pieces of writing in the whole book. However, readers of *THE MONTH* will probably be most interested in the long chapter entitled "Three Roman Catholic Poets," which contains a striking assessment of the poetical works of Coventry Patmore, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and Francis Thompson.

Earlier in this book, the author has already pointed out how the materialism of the Victorian era had an evil influence on the works of poets like Tennyson, forcing him to compromise with ideas and ideals contrary to his real nature. Now, in dealing with these three Catholic poets, Mr. Heath-Stubbs emphasizes how their Catholic faith allowed them to break away from this influence, and, aided by Catholic dogma, explore the higher regions of mystical thought. His study of Coventry Patmore's work is particularly valuable as it underlines the hidden virtues of his poem, *The Angel in the House*, which he maintains is a remarkable example of the period poem. As he says: "We have to go back to the Middle Ages, to Chaucer, to find the same loving and vivid delineation, in narrative verse, of scenes of contemporary manners. Though Chaucer is not, like Patmore, a mystic, the spiritual sense and the wholeness of the culture in which he lived furnished him with the same intuition of the poetic significance of apparently trivial events." He also has several illuminating passages on Patmore's use of metrical forms in his later work, *The Unknown Eros*.

Although Mr. Heath-Stubbs is not a Catholic himself he shows unusual sympathy and insight into the works of these Catholic poets. He even manages to throw fresh light on the poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, despite the volumes which have already been written about this wonderful poet. *The Darkling Plain*, scholarly, fresh in its views, and extremely well-written is without doubt one of the most remarkable books of literary criticism which have appeared in recent years.

DEREK PATMORE

SICILIAN BRIDE

The Backward Bride, by Aubrey Menen (Chatto and Windus 8s 6d).

THE title has a distinct flavour of light opera, the sub-title is *A Sicilian Scherzo*, and the first paragraph sets one at once in the right frame of mind, most musical, most un-melancholy. This is a tale—impossible to call it a novel—of a little Sicilian party suddenly transported to England: Giorgio the wise bandit, his nephew Aquila, undergraduate and progressive, and the latter's wife Anisetta, disarmingly simple as is the author's style. Catholic, *candide*. You will recognize the emerging theme, the simple soul set down among our sophistical complexities and causing devastation.

"Entrer chez les gens pour déconcerter leurs idées, . . . c'est, au moyen de l'ingénuité feinte ou réelle, donner à ressentir toute la relativité d'une civilisation." That is Valéry but it might have been Voltaire. Anisetta would know of neither, but she makes short work of the British philosopher with "the intensely contemporary and fearless mind" and a notable lack of morals, of the French Existentialist and the American prophet of Uplift for Women, while Uncle Giorgio wrestles dexterously in the background with English taxi-drivers, psycho-analysts, Communists with homicidal tendencies, and Aquila. In the end Aquila renounces progress, the party returns to Sicily, and the story ends with Anisetta minding the baby while her husband counts the oranges on his orchard trees. "Il faut cultiver notre jardin," in fact, but Sant'Agata reigns over this one, in good Sicilian style.

To say that the characters are figures in a movement rather than people is no reflection on their composer. It is true that the movement slackens occasionally and the mind frets at too prolonged a *rallentando*, as with the Professor's three wives who are not wives; but it is mollified by discovering a later variation upon the theme, with Anisetta's three lovers who are not lovers. Form is a delight even in a *divertissement*, particularly when combined with economy of means and lightness of touch, as it is here. As Giorgio says, however, after bursting into Massenet, "There is nothing flippant about my singing," and that puts it very well. Even if one learns nothing else from this book, it is pleasant to learn that comic opera and *conte philosophique* agree so well together.

ELIZABETH SEWELL

PERSONS AND PREDICAMENTS

The Mango on the Mango Tree, by David Mathew (Collins 9s 6d).

IT is impossible to approach a novel written by an Archbishop without a certain respectful awe. Yet, once launched on *The Mango on the Mango Tree*, I found myself forgetting the Archbishop in my interest in David Mathew the writer. The book deals with a large collection of characters temporarily brought together on an air journey to Africa. These characters, of different nationalities, races, classes, political and religious beliefs, are evidently meant to make up a representative microcosm of the restless, puzzled modern world. It is not a tract but a vivid statement of predicaments, each embodied in a perfectly credible human being. Obviously the author implies that there is one thing which would give underlying unity to these disparate creatures, but he does no more than imply. Though he has so much brilliance, wit, sympathy and discernment, he seems to me to lack some quality which would bind the book into a novel. He states but he does not develop. He shifts the focus so restlessly from one character's consciousness to another's, introduces so many new characters before one has sorted out the original set that the reader becomes dazzled and confused. It is exhausting to keep plunging to and fro from one mind, with all its flashbacks and chance associations, into another. One knows the past and *provenance* of all, but the future of none except the man who dies on the journey. After a time one resists the curiosity the writer so provocatively arouses and contents oneself with enjoying a series of brilliant and often subtle portraits. For David Mathew has a sense of human personality which is exceedingly rare even among writers who handle the novel more expertly. He enters quite uncannily into the mind and outlook of some two dozen people and chooses the right background, gesture and idiom for each. What could more neatly conjure up the past of the near-communist welfare-worker Purvis than his remembrance of his mentor Carter "with his fair damp hair, leaning awkwardly against the parallel bars in the boys' night club in the Isle of Dogs"? Or of Chibude, the African graduate of the L.S.E., than his double memories of the Graham Wallis room ("he had enjoyed every moment of that talk of equals under the bright electric lighting. All but the bitter cold") and of his Obuasi grandfather ("sitting under the gold-fringed umbrella, his right arm with its gilded wooden bracelets so full of power that it had to be supported")?

The book is uneven; sometimes written with staccato carelessness, sometimes with crystal precision, sometimes with imaginative beauty, as in the finest scene, the death of the exiled Pole Skorzewski, and in many scattered images and phrases. Perhaps it is the very liveliness of the author's mind, the warmth and width of his sympathy with people

and points of view that hampers him as a novelist. The abruptness of his transitions, the range of his allusions, make it hard for the reader to concentrate. I found it fascinating yet fatiguing to read; involving a kind of mental eyestrain as if I were watching a good film being run too fast through the projector.

ANTONIA WHITE

WORLD INVISIBLE

The Message of Fatima, by C. C. Martindale, S. J. (Burns and Oates 10s 6d).

DID Our Lady appear to three children of the Serra de Aire in Portugal in the months from May to October in 1917 and "speak" to them? And if so, what did she say to them and how are her words to be interpreted? Fr. Martindale writes as a believer in the apparitions and his modestly-advanced arguments will be of great aid in the interpretation of Our Lady's message. "The message of Fatima—if it be authentic, as I hold that it is—has world-wide implications to a degree that even Lourdes on the face of it had not." His book should rank as the most lucid and most objective examination of the facts and message of Fatima, though it does not attempt to give an exhaustive account of all the happenings. That can be had in Fr. da Fonseca's *Le Meraviglie di Fatima* (the English adaptation of Barthes's French adaptation is not always reliable) or better still in Fr. de Marchi's *Fatima the Facts* which has just been translated by Mrs. Kingsbury from the Portuguese. With Fathers Martindale and de Marchi the English reader is well equipped to make up his mind as to the facts and significance of Fatima.

We need reminding, perhaps, that the individual Catholic may make up his mind on a "private" revelation however "public" may be its seeming significance. He must, with the Thessalonians, "scrutinize it all carefully, retaining only what is good." Father Martindale's introduction is for that reason valuable and timely. It states clearly the difference between universal and private revelation and gives the main criteria for the judging of the content of private revelations. One of these is here of particular importance. Lucia, the chief and only surviving seer of Fatima, gave different accounts of the apparitions, some being written twenty-five years after the actual events. Her later statements add much to the statements made in the 1917 interrogations and deal also with further visions in later years. What has made the study of Fatima impossible hitherto, except for a privileged few, was that writers drew on the earlier and later versions (and sometimes on letters and interviews) and made an amalgam of them without indicating the several

sources. Fr. Martindale here presents the evidence as it came to the knowledge of the public. Assuming the sincerity of Lucia (there would seem to be no doubt of it) the question remains: can we accept her extended and embroidered account of 1942 as a trustworthy rendering of what occurred twenty-five years before? Observation of one's own mind and memory makes one very cautious about doing so and any knowledge of the history of mysticism will add to the caution. Fr. Martindale's suggestions on pages 166 and 167 are among the most important he makes and should be acceptable to all but the most stubborn "literalists" of Fatima. They are concerned specifically with Lucia's statements as to the outbreak of the recent war and the conversion of Russia. "For my part I would not feel in any way disconcerted to find that God, through Our Lady, communicated a truth to what mystical theologians have called the 'centre of the soul,' providentially guiding Lucia's mind and imagination to 'shape' it in such ideas and forms and to state it in such words as progressively came to be at her disposal." The acceptance of this theory would throw much light on the controverted Russian element in the Fatima story.

It may however be doubted if this explanation is needed for a much more important element of the apparitions and which constituted the "secret" of the June apparition, namely the devotion to the Heart of Mary. Fr. Martindale would seem to be on the track of a real clue when he says on page 167 that much attention should be given to the conversations that Lucia relates as having followed the apparitions! But he does not follow it up sufficiently. Fr. de Marchi gives accounts of at least four conversations between the children in which the "Heart" motif is strongly stressed. These conversations do not supply absolutely conclusive proof that the devotion to the Heart of Mary was revealed in so many words; but it seems improbable that a person of Lucia's sincerity and good memory would imagine such conversations, whatever the likelihood may be of her wrongly interpreting the—perhaps wordless—communications of Our Lady. And the danger of "styling" would be much less. Besides, if the spreading of devotion to the Immaculate Heart as a mighty aid to salvation does not constitute the "secret" of the June apparition it is very hard to see what does.

Perhaps too Fr. Martindale creates unnecessary difficulty about the angelic apparitions (with which the Heart revelation is so closely connected) by his suppositions about the "sheeted form." The straightforward account of the first apparition as given in *Fatima the Facts* (p. 33) or *Le Meraviglie*, 8th edition (p. 150), seems quite acceptable. As for the date, there is at least as much reason for accepting the year 1915 as for rejecting it; and the recent confirmation (however confusedly) by the three women who as girls shared Lucia's experience

must surely impress. Nor is there anything strange in the vision's having become gradually clearer.

Whatever the details, the general message of Fatima stands out clearly enough and unless one wishes to "extinguish the spirit" and remain sceptical as to all private revelation it would seem worthy of acceptance. It is the message of all the apparitions of Our Lady during the last hundred years (their number is striking), a message as old as the first preaching of Christianity. It is the *metanoia* of the Gospel, the "do-penance," the utter change-over of mind and attitude demanded by the Baptist and by Christ. Fatima restates the consequences of the refusal to be "converted." Need we be surprised that God should devise such a re-telling for a generation that has lost on a titanic scale the sense of the supernatural and of sin, or that Communist Russia, the leader of the first world-wide attack on the supernatural, should have its sad leadership recognized? Surely the facts of God's justice and His mercy need restatement when a philosophy of despair presents to a despairing generation a naturalized version of the Christian dogma of Hell. *Huis Clos* is one man's play, but it stages the secret thought of thousands: the age of Belsen and Siberia is wide-openly receptive for the theory that *l'enfer, c'est les autres*. Altogether remarkable also is the preoccupation with damnation in the work of contemporary Catholic novelists. Indeed it is that quasi-obsession in their haunted characters, combined with the absence of any sense of tenderness for Our Lady (Bernanos is an occasional exception), that makes their tragedies so really terrible for the Catholic reader. Our Lady came to the Cova da Iria because she too is "preoccupied" with damnation—in fact not in fiction; and that preoccupation was pathetically—and heroically—shared by Francisco and Jacinta for the space of their brief lives. To the Pinkies and the Scobies and the Thérèses of actual life (and who amongst us can claim he has no part with them?) Fatima re-reveals Hell. But over against Hell's darkness and its pride it places Our Lady "all of light" and the simplicity of the Rosary; and to hearts tortured even in time by an eternal loss it shows the heart of the Mother of One "whose property it is to have mercy and to spare."

DONAL O'SULLIVAN

ANNALS OF A CENTURY

The English Catholics 1850-1950. Essays in celebration of the Centenary of the Restoration of the Hierarchy. Edited by Rt. Rev. George Andrew Beck, A.A. (Burns and Oates 35s).

THERE never was such a family scrap-book or such a jumble and jubilee put up like this hurried triumphal arch for Wembley. The more we are delighted to find, the more we miss—for like all such albums we want to stick in so many of our own souvenirs. We should like a page of handwritings: Newman's and Manning's and for sheer beauty Bishop Burton's and Adrian Fortescue's. Still somehow everybody seems to have crept aboard this Catholic omnibus except a few known only to God. We have a mixture of statisticians and historians working at breakneck speed. Philip Hughes ensures two reliable recordings—"The Bishops of the Century" who nearly made a century in number themselves—and the oddly called "Coming Century" which we read hoping that the Church had suddenly added astrology to the gifts of her priests and that we should learn of future Cardinals, the conversion of Wales, the Red Hat in Scotland and a few other possibilities. It should have been called "The Past Century." David Mathew is precise and charming about "Old Catholics and Converts." Such a passage about the late Seventies reads like a Resurrection morning:

Arthur Conan Doyle left Stonyhurst; Francis Thompson left Ushaw; Edgar Wallace was christened in the Catholic Church at Greenwich. Among the young married couples living in London were the Wilfrid Meynells in Inkerman Terrace and the Ernest Cassels in Orme Square. . . . Edward Elgar was organist at St. George's, Worcester; Richard Terry was organist in the Anglican Cathedral at Antigua.

So Sherlock Homes was trained by Jesuits! Well, that explains much, but the "importance of being Ernest Cassel" was subject even to the importance of being a Catholic. So much lies buried between the lines.

Humphrey Johnson supplies a good chapter on Newman and the connection with Mivart is interesting. Between the two could the theologians of the time have been reconciled to a spiritual idea of Evolution?

Interesting articles in their own right are by Denis Gwynn on "Irish Immigration" and by H. O. Evennett on "Catholics and the Universities," and most vital of all on "The Struggle for the Schools," by Mr. Beales. The lesson of all is the same. The Hierarchy were too late and in every case the Church has found herself on the last tide but one. The University Question has been settled and the story is succinctly told. But the number of Irish descendants lost for lack of

schools and missionaries can be estimated only in millions. The School campaign succeeded till 1902 and then deteriorated owing to lack of unanimity as well as the national drift away from religion. In some ways this massive volume presents us with a flowery façade, behind which loss and leakage seem continuous while mastery of command and campaign, which distinguished the rule of Manning and Vaughan, is no longer evident as it was.

The Irish did not leave the Faith, but in wide districts the Faith left them in the second and third generation. Their recovery to the Church will be the touchstone whether the Church is to become as powerful and beneficent an influence as her advocates hope in a country which has abandoned religious virtues as well as the old ecclesiastical enmities.

It is consoling to turn to Edward Hutton's review of Catholic English Literature. His quick flash-notes on the poets are admirable. He realizes the greatness of Belloc, but he knows what small grain has followed the giants. "After Newman and Acton there is a long gap" . . . and no more need be said.

On the whole, the essays might be rehashed and diluted in the form of one of Arthur Mee's books—"1,000 and one facts" about the English Catholics, about forgotten Bishops, and characters. Figures and statistics make a flowerage of their own. It is pleasant to find memories of Charles Waterton, Mgr. Hugh Benson, Wilfrid Blunt, Edmund Bishop, "Lothair" Bute, Baron Corvo, Mrs. Craigie, Lord Alfred Douglas, Fathers Gallwey, Bede Jarrett, Vincent McNabb and Wilfrid Meynell, who all fit the picturesque mosaic. It is pleasant to read Mr. J. J. Dwyer doing justice to the *Rambler* and the *Home and Foreign Review* in striking terms:

The loss was incalculable. Had Newman's editorship of the *Rambler* been allowed to continue, with Acton in close alliance as a fount of historical scholarship, the results would have been far-reaching. . . . Froude would almost certainly have been demolished; Stubbs and Green would have learned to write differently; and the intellectual life of the English Catholics immeasurably enriched.

Stirring and satisfactory as it is to read all this flotsam and jetsam of the tides in the past hundred years, it leaves an impression of continual chances being missed while possibilities seem to have been tantalizing. It seems difficult to imagine Cardinals writing novels (with a touch of the best seller), a Catholic layman Regius Professor of History in Cambridge, a Scripture mooted from the pen of Newman, leading poets on the horizon steeped in Catholicism like Francis Thompson and Manley Hopkins: but all this has been and may be again.

Behind the glittering heights we are invited to study the slough of despond and the valleys of leakage. This is well described in Mr. John

Bennett's chapter on "The Care of the Poor" and the struggle to save thousands and thousands of children. As long as the Irish were herded in great cities, the future roots of the Church in England had to be planted in the slums. It is clear the Church has allowed a superb façade to conceal the agonizing truth.

SHANE LESLIE

EXERCISES OF IGNATIUS

The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, translated with a commentary by W. H. Longridge (Mowbray 16s).

THE *Spiritual Exercises* is neither a complete text-book of asceticism nor a passionate plea for extreme piety, but a series of very concise and even rather flat meditations on the fundamental truths of faith and on the great scenes in the Gospels—a precise method of reflection and prayer with a clearly defined purpose: spiritual exercises whereby to order one's life, without being influenced in one's decision by any inordinate affection.

It is not surprising that this work, highly praised by the Popes from Paul III to Pius XII, has often been attacked and travestied. Anglicans were slow to recognize its merits, but since the middle of the last century, realizing the part it could play in training the clergy, many have found it a source of inspiration; retreats more or less closely based on the Exercises of St. Ignatius have increased, in particular under the influence of the Rev. R. M. Benson, founder of the Mission Priests of the Society of St. John the Evangelist at Cowley, Oxford, of the Association for promoting Retreats and of the review *The Vision*.

One of the most faithful interpreters of St. Ignatius' thought was certainly Dr. W. H. Longridge, member of the Society of St. John, who died in 1930 at the age of eighty-four. His book, of which this is the fourth edition, gives a complete translation from the Spanish original, the rough language of which expresses more exactly than the Latin version of Frusius different shades of the Saint's meaning. Numerous notes are borrowed from Fr. Roothaan's Latin translation or inspired by the best Jesuit commentators. The book concludes with a translation of the official *Directorium* drawn up in 1599. The advice collected in this book, the fruit of half a century's experience, must surely prove useful to many others besides disciples of the Saint.

Catholic reviews were apparently unanimous in praising the first edition of this conscientious work (1919). The present edition is a reprint of the third. Several small details are the most that can be criticized. The correction suggested by Fr. Roothaan: "en efecto" instead of "en afecto" is unacceptable (p. 112, n. 72)—cf. A. Codina,

Exercitia Spirit. S. Ign., Madrid, 1919, p. 360, n. 1. On the subject of the "second degree of humility," the translation "furthermore" conforms with Fr. Roothaan's "itemque"; "consequently" or "therefore" would be a more exact rendering of the Saint's thought (p. 121). In the rules for temperance, neither Fr. Roothaan nor Dr. Longridge noticed what is certainly a copyist's mistake: "investigar" instead of "instigar" (p. 145).

Dr. Longridge's understanding of the method and spirit of the *Exercises* deserves special praise. Far from being rigid, this method is extremely flexible. In fact, throughout the work St. Ignatius frequently emphasizes the necessity of adapting its directions to the age, health, spiritual needs, aptitude and progress of those making the retreat. Dr. Longridge, it may be pointed out, is the author of *Three Retreats for Lay People to the Method and Plan of the Spiritual Exercises and Retreats for Priests*.

With regard to his fidelity to the spirit of the *Exercises*, it is a pleasure to read his notes and comments on zeal for "the greatest glory of God" (pp. 28, 34-6, 206), on the perfect balance or "indifference" to be established in the soul in order to avoid being carried away by more or less inordinate affections (pp. 29-31, 114, 130), finally on the love of God carried to the point which Ignatius calls the third degree of humility (pp. 123-4, 248-9).

In conclusion, it is to be hoped that in future editions the publishers will add an index to the *Exercises* or combine one with the index to the *Directorium*, and that the paragraphs will be numbered in the way laid down by the *Monumenta Historica S.J.*

P. PINARD DE LA BOULLAYE

THE SOUL'S ASCENT

The Graces of Interior Prayer. A Treatise on Mystical Theology, by A. Poulain, S.J., revised and corrected to accord with the tenth French edition, with an Introduction by J. V. Bainvel, S.J. (Routledge and Kegan Paul 30s).

THAT this book should be re-issued and emended bears striking witness to the tendency of our times towards the higher forms of prayer, or, in one word, mysticism, and to the seriousness with which an approach to the subject is being made. For there is, of course, a frivolous interest in mysticism, due to curiosity, or an appetite for the abnormal. But no one suffering from this spiritual sickness will persevere with more than a page or two of Fr. Poulain's book. Nor could this book be so much as recommended to any save the serious *student*, because Fr. Poulain knows well that he has not said the last word on

the subject, and perhaps no one ever can. His confrère, the late Fr. Bainvel, in his enormous Introduction, indicates many points in which he differs from the author, and further, he describes various schools of thought concerned with mysticism which differ not only from Fr. Poulain but among themselves. One difficulty is due to the lack of a universally admitted terminology for the defining of mystical "states"; and, more radically, agreement is not reached on questions such as: Are the higher forms of prayer open to all Christians, so that if they are not attained to by this man or that, he must be regarded as a "slothful servant"; or, are they reserved by God for very specially chosen souls? On the whole, then, we think that this book (and maybe any such book) is far better suited to spiritual directors than to those who seek their direction. It is surely rare that a mystic can both experience these great graces and analyse them as St. Hildegard, St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross could do. As Fr. Bainvel wisely says (p. xcii), the more a soul forgets itself, the better, which it will not do if it is advised to examine itself interminably in order to see to what particular level of prayer it has climbed—or been lifted. What strikes us as especially valuable both in the introduction (para. 34) and in the book itself is the insistence on the survival of "nature" (temperament, call it what you will: habitual mental processes, customary images in the mind) even though a soul may be raised to great heights. The obliteration of natural characteristics in the account of Saints such as are to be read in the Second Nocturn fly full in the face, for example, of the Decree of the S.C.R. concerning the Cause of (St.) Antonio Maria Gianelli. "Differences set in men by Nature or by God the Origin and Artificer of Nature are so far from being rendered barren, deadened or annihilated by Grace, that Grace actually fosters, enlivens and develops them to perfection." Therefore we are not surprised if Saints (or mystics short of acknowledged sanctity) make all kinds of mistakes about their quite genuine experiences. The disentangling of what is "natural" psychologically from what is supernatural and a gift freely granted by God is of the highest importance when any seemingly abnormal occurrence, or mode of prayer, is being studied. We certainly recommend this book then, and very highly, especially to directors; but as we said, the less the man at prayer dissects himself the better. But at least we have escaped, for good (please God), from the positive fear of and flight from the topic which desiccated the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

C. C. MARTINDALE

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